

Desolate Era

(莽荒纪)

Book 06

Breaking Through the Cocoon, Becoming  
a Butterfly

I Eat Tomatoes

(我吃西红柿)

Story Description:

Fate had never been kind to Ji Ning. Wracked by illnesses and infirm his entire life on Earth, Ning knew early on that he would die as a teenager. What he didn't know was that there really was such a thing as life after death, and that the multiverse was a far larger place than he thought. A lucky twist of fate (one of the few in Ning's life) meant that Ning was reborn into a world of Immortals and monsters, of Ki Refiners and powerful Fiendgods, a world where Dynasties lasted for millions of years. A world which is both greater...and yet also smaller... than he ever could imagine. He would have the opportunity to join them, and in this life, Ning swore to himself, he would never let himself be weak again! The Era he was born into was a Desolate one, but Ning would make it his era.

Original Story can be found here: [Link](#)

# Chapter 1: The Four Palaces of the Aquatic Manor

The tall, wide, ancient hall was the same as it had been for countless years. Many enormous prayer mats were placed throughout the hall, and an old black ox had appeared, smiling as he looked at the suddenly arrived Ji Ning.

“The main hall.” Ning looked at the great hall.

“Congratulations.” The old black bull walked over, filled with joy. “It’s only been a few years, but you’ve already reached the Zifu level. It was faster than I anticipated.”

Ning was still worrying about the impending arrival of a large group of experts from Snowdragon Mountain, and so he said without too much joy, “I was simply lucky.”

“The fact that you made it through those three trials earlier wasn’t a matter of luck.” The old black bull sighed. “You bound the control talisman...and you are now able to go to the most important places within the Aquatic Manor. With access to these places, you will now have the capital to truly rise to sudden prominence. Ji Ning, I feel as though I can already see into the future, with you as being one of the supreme experts of the Darcian Dynasty.”

Ning was stunned. He hadn’t imagined that this old black bull, the spirit of a magic treasure, would be so good at flattery.

“I’m not lying.” The old black bull said. “Immortal Juhua’s decision to accept a disciple caused countless people throughout the Darcian Dynasty to go wild. If they knew that Immortal Juhua was merely the third master of this Aquatic Manor, most likely, a true storm would have erupted in the world.”

“What exactly is so special about this Aquatic Manor?” Ning hurriedly asked.

What he cared the most about was if this Aquatic Manor would be able

to increase his power or not, and if he would be able to have a greater chance of success in the upcoming battle.

“The Aquatic Manor has many secrets.” The old black bull said. “Immortal Juhua and I stayed here for a very long time. If my predictions are correct...this manor should have been designed for training future generations of Fiendgods.”

“Training future generations of Fiendgods?” Ning was stunned.

“Right.” The old black bull nodded his large head. “The first master of this Aquatic Manor should have been an extremely powerful Fiendgod! Just look at the prayer mats throughout the main hall, and you will understand...originally, quite a few Fiendgods would have sat here, waiting for his command and listening to him expound on the correct way of training.”

Ning stared at the enormous nearby prayer mats, as well as that solitary prayer mat seated at the front of the hall. He nodded gently.

“The first master’s method for accepting disciples was through two corridors; one for Xiantian-level Fiendgod Body Refiners, while the other was for Zifu-level Fiendgod Body Refiners.” The old black bull said.

“Ordinary Fiendgod practitioners wouldn’t suffice. Only those whose bodies had transformed and become like the bodies of Fiendgods would qualify. Wouldn’t this be, essentially, true Fiendgods?”

Ning nodded.

His own body had been birthed from fire and water that had descended from the heavens. He did indeed have the body of a Xiantian Fiendgod.

“In addition, clearly the various halls of the Aquatic Manor are meant for cultivating later Fiendgods.” The old black bull said. “Unfortunately, the path of Fiendgods is simply too difficult. Although Immortal Juhua originally started on the path of Fiendgod Body Refining as well, slowly, that path became more and more difficult for him. He advanced more rapidly as a Ki Refiner, but in the end, he failed his tribulation and became a Loose Immortal.”

Ning understood. For example, although he himself focused almost all of his effort on training as a Fiendgod Body Refiner, he had first established his Zifu as a Ki Refiner!

Ki Refining was simple. Body Refining was hard.

Perhaps in the future, he would become an Earth Immortal as a Ki Refiner while he was only at the Primordial Daoist level as a Fiendgod Body Refiner...or even just a Wanxiang Adept! Perhaps he, too, would face the tribulation as a Ki Refiner, and end up failing and becoming a Loose Immortal...it was completely possible that he would end up tracing the path of Immortal Juhua.”

“Let me give you a warning.” The old black bull looked at Ning. “This is what Immortal Juhua once said to his disciple, Rampart.”

“Please speak.” Ning immediately said.

“This Aquatic Manor is meant for cultivating Fiendgods. Thus, do your best to walk the path of the Fiendgods.” The old black bull said. “Even if you are at the very verge of the Void stage and becoming an Earth Immortal, Ji Ning, you should halt your training in Ki. No matter what, do not go face the tribulation! Work hard as a Fiendgod Body Refiner and undergo the tribulation as a Fiendgod first.”

Ning frowned.

“According to the hypotheses of Immortal Juhua, the farther along you go on the path of the Fiendgods, the greater assistance this Aquatic Manor will be for you. Immortal Juhua sensed that this Aquatic Manor had some secrets he still didn’t know! They should have been secrets passed down by the first master...but unfortunately, Immortal Juhua was unable to divine them.” The old black bull said.

“Thank you, senior, for your warning. Ji Ning will remember it.” Ning said hurriedly.

“The first owner possessed incredible, divine powers, and he far eclipsed Immortal Juhua.” The old black bull said. “Wait until you go to the Stellar Hall. Then you will understand.”

“Stellar Hall?” Ning was puzzled.

Suddenly...

An illusion suddenly began to form in empty space. It quickly solidified into a tall, powerful bear. The bear’s entire body was covered with yellow fur, and it was staring towards Ning...and as it did, Ning felt as though it was a sort of eternal, ancient existence. This was the same feeling he had when he visualized the painting of Maiden Nuwa in his mind.

No matter how much time passed, it would be eternally present! This was the feeling that the giant bear gave Ning; only, the feeling was murkier, not as powerful as the one which the Nuwa Painting gave him.

“Elder Brother.” The old black bull hurriedly lowered his face and called out. Ning could sense the bull’s mouth trembling, and the old black bull hurriedly said to Ning, “This is the spirit of the aquatic manor.”

“The spirit of the manor?” Ning sensed how the head of this enormous bear before him...seemed very similar to the giant illusion of a bear head which transported him here.

“Ji Ning greets you, senior.” Ning said respectfully.

The giant yellow bear glanced at him. “Yet another who reached the Zifu level as a Ki Refiner first. You train in the [Scarlet Diagram of the Nine Shining Heavens], the number one Fiendgod Body Refining technique in the world. You possess a strong Fiendgod lineage. Work hard as a Fiendgod Body Refiner. Don’t waste your natural talent and potential.”

“Yes.” Ning could feel the invisible aura emanating forward from the giant yellow bear.

That ancient, eternal presence alone...made Ning feel as though this wasn’t something which ordinary practitioners would be capable of. The fact that the spirit of the manor was capable of teleporting people was, in an of itself, incredible and mysterious.

Immortal Juhua was an expert during the latter stages of the Fiendgod Era.

And the spirit of the manor? It had followed the very first master. How ancient was it? How powerful was it? It was best to be humble when facing it.

“Follow me.” The giant yellow bear walked in front.

“Hurry, follow.” The old black bull urged, hurriedly following as well.

Ning followed from behind as the giant yellow bear led the way, into a corridor on the right side of the main hall that was three thousand meters tall.

The giant yellow bear said while walking, “After having bound the control talisman, you can be considered a master-in-training. Aside from the main hall, you can also enter this corridor, which had four major secondary halls. These four major secondary halls are open to you...but of course, right now, you are limited to them. If you want to enter more halls, you’ll have to become a Primordial Daoist.”

Ning understood.

Becoming a Zifu Disciple and binding the control talisman was only the first step.

Becoming a Primordial Daoist and binding the entire estate was just the second step.

Most likely, even the second step would be just a simple binding, allowing one to carry it with him at all times. Most likely, the Aquatic Manor still would not be under complete control, as otherwise, Immortal Juhua wouldn’t have said that he suspected there were more mysteries within.

“Look.” The giant yellow bear pointed into the distance. An ancient, azure bronze gate was there, which was open.

Ning hurriedly walked over, looking through the bronze gate....

Wow.

Ning’s eyes were round He saw an enormous hall past the gate, in the middle of which floated one magic treasure after another, each of them

emanating a powerful, ancient aura. Ning saw a large warhammer which glittered with tricolored light that made Ning's heart pound frantically just staring at it, as though it were about to explode.

There were also four formation flags of different colors. When he looked at it, he felt as though he was being drawn into a boundless separate world.

"This is the Treasure Pavilion, one of the four major secondary halls you can currently enter." The giant yellow bear said. "The Treasure Pavilion is the place where Master stored his countless treasures, ranging from unique mortal items to items from the time of Primal Chaos, when Pangu split the heavens and created the universe. Master set down a rule for all of these treasures; as long as you can satisfy the requirements the Master set down, you can acquire them."

Ning held his breath.

Items of Primal Chaos, from when Pangu split the heavens? What were they? But Ning knew that Fiendgods were naturally birthed from the heavens, and that after Pang split the heavens, there were many Fiendgods.

Now, it seemed as though this Aquatic Manor truly had been left behind by an extremely ancient, powerful Fiendgod.

"What do I need to do to acquire these treasures? What are the requirements?" Ning asked.

"After you enter the Treasure Pavilion and slowly look through it, you'll see the rules which Master left behind." The giant yellow bear said.

Ning nodded slightly.

The first master had created the two corridors that had to be traversed for future disciples to be accepted. The rules of the Treasure Pavilion were also set by the first master...clearly, the first master had the greatest influence on the Aquatic Manor, while Immortal Juhua was just a passerby.

"Continue walking." The giant yellow bear said while walking. "The next

secondary hall...is the Divine Abilities Hall that you are now able to enter.”

“Divine Abilities Hall?” Ning was stunned.

Divine abilities?

He had only acquired a single divine ability, the [Windwing Evasion]. Ning knew exactly how precious divine abilities were. They weren’t things which just anyone could acquire.

“Here we are.” After having walked momentarily, the giant yellow bear pointed to another nearby giant bronze door. That ancient bronze door had a single bronze palm above it, and the palm emanated boundless might, carrying the power to seal the heavens and block out the sun.

“This is the Divine Abilities Hall.” The giant yellow bear said. “Only Fiendgods who fulfill two requirements are allowed to enter. The first is that the Fiendgod Body Refiner reaches the level of Blood-Drop Rebirth. The second is that it must be done within ten years; at most, ten years.”

Ning was stunned.

Blood-Drop Rebirth? That meant being at the Zifu-level as a Fiendgod Body Refiner. He hadn’t reached that yet.

Ten years?

He was already more than ten years old.

“In the past, Immortal Juhua was more than ten years old, so he wasn’t permitted to enter the Divine Abilities Hall.” The giant yellow bear said. “If he had been able to enter it, Immortal Juhua probably would’ve been able to walk a longer path and his power should have been even greater. Perhaps...he wouldn’t have ended up becoming a Loose Immortal.” The giant yellow bear was clearly rather sentimental towards Immortal Juhua, who had controlled the estate for millions of years, after all.

The old black bull sighed as well. “My master always felt regret for the fact that he wasn’t able to enter the Divine Abilities Hall. Every single one of these four secondary halls are important. Master was able to enter the other three, but he wasn’t able to enter this Divine Abilities Hall, and



when he passed through the challenge corridors, he was more than ten years old.”

Ning felt bitterness in his heart.

No matter how you calculated it, he was more than ten years old! Could it be that he, too, had lost the chance to enter the Divine Abilities Hall?

“Fortunately, you are lucky. You are only five years old.” The giant yellow bear glanced at Ning.

“Five years old?” Ning stared.

The old black bull understood what Ning was thinking. “Fiendgods are born at the Xiantian level. You are indeed only five years old.”

# Chapter 2: Treasures

The age referred to age as Fiendgods reckoned it; true Fiendgods were nurtured by the natural world and born as Xiantian lifeforms. As for Ning, when he was eleven years old, celestial fire and water had descended, nurturing his body and transforming it into a Fiendgod's body, just like a normal Fiendgod who had just been birthed. And now he was sixteen...as Fiendgods reckoned it, Ning was indeed only five.

"To be able to establish a Zifu within ten years will be proof of your potential." The giant yellow bear looked at the towering bronze gate, a complicated look in his eyes. "Only then will you be able to enter the Divine Abilities Hall...within the Divine Abilities Hall is a test which Master left behind. If you pass, you will be able to acquire an extremely powerful divine ability which Master left behind."

"Remember; you only have a single chance to enter the Divine Abilities Hall." The giant yellow bear looked towards Ning. "Thus, the more powerful you are, the greater your chance will be. It is best if you enter it at ten years of age; otherwise, if you fail, you won't be able to acquire a divine ability. After all, it is a trial; it does hold some danger, and if you aren't careful, you'll lose even your own life."

Ning asked with curiosity, "What divine abilities are held within the Divine Abilities Hall?"

The giant yellow bear looked towards Ning, then said calmly, "After having passed the trials, you'll know. And if you don't make it through? You won't be qualified to know."

"Come. Let's go to the next hall." The giant yellow bear continued forward.

Ning looked at the single palm above the giant bronze door, radiating that inexhaustible, majestic presence.

Divine Abilities Hall?

His Fiendgod body had yet to reach the Zifu level. There was no point

thinking about it for now.

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The giant yellow bear was in front of them, in this ancient corridor, with the old black bull by his side and Ning walking behind them.

“This secondary hall.” The giant yellow bear looked towards a towering bronze door that was shut. This bronze door had an axe and a spear carved onto it, and a killing aura emanated from it. The bronze door itself had a bloody red light glowing from it, causing Ning to unconsciously feel fear in his heart.

“This is the Wargod Hall.” The giant yellow bear said. “This is the most dangerous place in the entire Aquatic Manor, but a place filled with opportunity.”

The most dangerous? Filled with opportunity?

Ning was curious.

“Continue looking.” The giant yellow bear didn’t waste words, immediately walking forward.

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From far away, the distant sound of flowing water could faintly be heard. Ning looked with curiosity towards the already opened wooden door. The wooden door was open, and through it, flowing water could be seen, along with some boulders as well as some lonely straw huts.

“This is the Stellar Hall.” The giant yellow bear stood in front of the hall, staring into the vast, boundless space within. “Everything within the Stellar Hall was personally laid out by Master. When living within the Stellar Hall, one can even sense the wondrous mysteries of the Dao.”

The nearby old black bull also said excitedly, “Ji Ning, Immortal Juhua had a lifespan of millions of years, precisely because of this Stellar Hall. The wondrous mysteries of the Dao fill every single part of this Stellar Hall, and it even has multiple complete ‘Daos’...Immortal Juhua had the Stellar Hall, which is why he was at such a high level of understanding,

allowing him to withstand so many tribulations and living millions of years.

“Multiple complete Daos?” Ning was rather puzzled.

“I’ve told you everything already.” The giant yellow bear looked at Ning. “The places you are now granted entrance into are the main hall, this corridor, and these four major secondary halls. You are not permitted entry into the other parts, nor would you be able to enter if you wanted to. Act appropriately. I hope you’ll be able to live to become a Primordial Daoist.”

Whoosh.

The giant yellow bear disappeared into specks of light, then completely vanished.

Ning let out a sigh of relief. When facing the giant yellow bear, he always felt that it gave him tremendous pressure, as though he were facing an ancient, powerful Fiendgod.

“That’s how the spirit of the manor is.” The old black bull laughed. “Forget about you; he didn’t even care much about Immortal Juhua. He’s quite arrogant and solitary. Actually, after so many years have passed, I felt that it was normal for him to be so solitary. After all, even Immortal Juhua didn’t truly master this Aquatic Manor.”

Ning seemed to understand, and he nodded slightly.

And then he hurriedly asked, “Senior, what should I do right now in these four major secondary halls? Please guide me, senior.”

“First, go to the Treasure Hall.” The old black bull said. “Follow me. I’m quite familiar with it.”

“Fine.” Ning felt that the old black bull was much more amiable and genial than the giant yellow bear, the spirit of the manor.

The Treasure Hall.

Ning and the old black bull walked together into it, and as Ning did, he instantly felt as though he entered a different world. In the air hung a vast

collection of magic treasures, some of which were so powerful that their aura alone made Ning feel his heart shake. Most likely, even the slightest of ripples from it would cause him to be crushed and ground to dust. The power of it was far beyond what he imagined.

“Treasures...” The old black bull sighed, his eyes shining. “All of them are true treasures. Immortal Juhua drooled when looking at them as well, back in the day. But there was nothing he could do; he couldn’t acquire them. If he was able to pick and choose as he pleased from these treasures, Immortal Juhua probably would’ve overcome the heavenly tribulation and become a Celestial Immortal long ago.”

Ning felt his heart be moved, as he stared at them.

He saw that above him was a blood-colored warspear. The warspear looked quite plain, but just hanging there, it caused the surrounding space to crumble and crack, although it then quickly recovered. Crumbling, recovering, crumbling...this continued nonstop.

“These were all left by the first master.” The old black bull said hurriedly. “He left them for the future masters. He wanted to cultivate and provide for them, and so if you want to acquire these treasures, you’ll have to fulfill his requirements. Otherwise, even if you end up like Immortal Juhua, dying due to the Three Calamities and Nine Tribulations, you still won’t be able to acquire a single treasure.”

Ning was curious. “What are the rules? What must I do to acquire these treasures?”

“Look over there.” The old black bull’s head nodded towards the side. Ning followed the bull’s gaze to look, only to see a tight cluster of tiny words on the distant wall. These words were all Fiendgod characters.

Ning hurriedly walked over, reading them all at one go.

“So that’s the situation.” Ning frowned.

The treasures of the Treasure Hall...were all obtainable.

There were two methods.

The first was to rise in power as a Fiendgod practitioner.

Once one reached the Zifu level as a Fiendgod practitioner, one would be able to acquire a 'Mortal-rank magic treasure', or a precious item of equivalent value.

Upon reaching the Wanxiang level as a Fiendgod practitioner, one would be able to select a single 'Earth-rank magic treasure' or equivalent.

Upon reaching the Primordial level as a Fiendgod practitioner, one would be able to select a single 'Heaven-rank magic treasure' or equivalent.

Upon reaching the Void level, one would be able to select an 'Immortal-rank magic treasure'...

After after successfully passing the tribulation and becoming a Celestial Immortal! One would be able to select a 'Pure Yang magic treasure' or equivalent.

"So there are actually five ranks of magic treasures." Ning murmured. "Zifu Disciples are only able to activate Mortal-rank magic treasures, while Wanxiang Adepts are able to use Earth-rank magic treasures. Primordials are able to use Heaven-rank magic treasures...and above that are Immortal-rank magic treasures and Pure Yang magic treasures."

Ning had never even heard of these things before. All he knew was that there was such a thing as a 'ranked' magic treasure.

"There are five ranks of magic treasures." The old black bull nearby said. "In addition, ranked magic treasures are also divide into 'exceptional', 'superior', 'average', and 'low' quality items. The Zifu Disciples in that Swallow Mountain area of yours might use ranked magic treasures, but the vast majority of them are low quality or average quality magic treasures. However, if you were able to choose at will from the Treasure Hall...I trust you would naturally be able to select the best of yourself."

Ning listened carefully. These were things he had no idea about.

"The further you advance in your training, the harder it will be for you to acquire magic treasures." The old black bull said. "At the Void level, Earth

Immortals will be able to activate Immortal-rank magic treasures, but Immortal-rank magic treasures...can be considered treasures amongst Immortals. How many Void level Earth Immortals will truly be able to acquire treasures of that level? They are incredibly rare. Thus, generally speaking, those Earth Immortals and Loose Immortals will generally use Heaven-rank magic treasures.”

“In the past, Immortal Juhua became bottlenecked at the Primordial Daoist level as a Fiendgod practitioner. No matter what he did, he wasn’t able to break through and reach the Void level. It was pointless for him to break through to the Void level as a Ki Refiner.” The old black bull shook his head. “Thus, he was never able to acquire an Immortal-rank magic treasure.”

“Ah.” Ning was stunned.

Right.

When one rose in power, one could acquire a treasure, but that was only as a Fiendgod. As for Ki Refiners? No matter how far you advanced, you wouldn’t be bestowed any treasures. Thus, one could imagine how much the first master hoped that his future inheritors would focus on training as Fiendgods.

“Afterwards, Immortal Juhua failed in his tribulation and became a Loose Immortal. After countless years, his power grew greater and greater, and then he succeeded in passing through the seventh level of the Wargod Hall, which was when he was bestowed an Immortal-rank magic treasure.” The old black bull said. “Afterwards, Immortal Juhua collected a large amount of materials, over the course of which he defeated the Thousand Swords Immortal. After acquiring the hundreds of flying swords from the Thousand Swords Immortal...he finally forged me.”

Ning said, curious, “Senior, what rank of a magic treasure are you?”

“An Immortal-rank magic treasure, of course.” The old black bull said arrogantly. “I am an Immortal-rank magic treasure. I have already surpassed the levels of Human, Earth, and Heaven; thus, I gained sentience. Immortal Juhua relied on me to establish his awe-inspiring

fame!”

“Your Fiendgod body is only at the Xiantian lifeform level. To acquire magic treasures, you’ll have to achieve victory in the Wargod Hall.” The old black bull said.

Ning nodded.

There were two methods to acquiring the treasures of the Treasure Hall. The first was to rise in power as a Fiendgod. The second was to challenge the Wargod Hall, which had ten stages in total.

If one succeeded in overcoming the first or second stage of the Wargod Hall, one was allowed to choose a Mortal-rank magic treasure or another item of equivalent value.

If one succeeded in overcoming the third or fourth stage of the Wargod Hall, one was allowed to choose an Earth-rank magic treasure or another item of equivalent value.

If one succeeded in overcoming the fifth or sixth stage of the Wargod Hall, one was allowed to choose a Heaven-rank magic treasure or another item of equivalent value.

If one succeeded in overcoming the seventh or eighth stage of the Wargod Hall, one was allowed to choose an Immortal-rank magic treasure or another item of equivalent value.

If one succeeded in overcoming the ninth or tenth stage of the Wargod Hall, one was allowed to choose a Pure Yang magic treasure or another item of equivalent value.

The Fiendgod practitioners who had inherited the manor were each given two chances to challenge the Wargod Hall at each level of power. For example, Ning was now a Xiantian lifeform as a Fiendgod. He had two chances to go challenge the Wargod Hall. Once his Fiendgod form reached the Zifu level, he would gain two more chances.

Xiantian, Zifu, Wanxiang, Primordial, Void.

Before becoming an Immortal, he would only have ten chances! Each



chance was incomparably precious!

“Challenging the Wargod Hall is too hard.” The old black bull shook his head and sighed. “But this is the second way in which one can acquire a treasure of the Treasure Hall. Even though it is hard, you’ll have to try.”

“It is indeed hard.” Ning nodded. Even Immortal Juhua had only overcome the seventh stage of the Wargod Hall after having become a Loose Immortal and spent countless years training.

The nearby old black bull said, “I watched you training in Serpentwing Lake with your sword. I don’t want to discourage you, but...for you to challenge the first level with your current level of power? You’d have less than a ten percent chance.”

“Less than ten percent?” Ning didn’t dare believe it.

The Wargod Hall had ten levels in total. The first two levels only allowed him to select a Mortal-rank magic treasure. He had trained with the sword at Brightmoon Island...which was within the scope of the Aquatic Manor, and so the old black bull knew exactly how strong he had become. But he was now saying that if Ning went to the Wargod Hall, he would have less than ten percent chance of victory?

“Treasure Hall. Divine Abilities Hall. Wargod Hall. Stellar Hall.” The old black bull said. “The Treasure Hall is a place where, for now ,you won’t be able to acquire a single treasure. You aren’t able to enter the Divine Abilities Hall yet either. You’ll have to go to one of the other two halls.”

“Wargod Hall...perhaps you can give it a try. If you succeed, you’ll be able to select a magic treasure. It will definitely be far superior to the ranked magic treasures you currently have. But of course, if you lose, that means that you’ll have wasted a chance to challenge the Wargod Hall.”

“The Stellar Hall is filled with countless paths of the Dao, and is an excellent place for gaining insight into it.”

“Which place shall you go to?” The old black bull looked towards Ning.

# Chapter 3: A Tempest Outside the Straw Hut

“Senior, since you said that I have less than a ten percent chance of passing through the Wargod Hall’s challenge, why should I make the attempt?” Ji Ning said. “In addition, Immortal Juhua gained the greatest benefit from this Stellar Hall. I’m quite curious about it.”

As he spoke, Ning stepped into a room.

As for the treasures of the Treasure Hall? If he couldn’t touch them, what was the point? Immortal Juhua himself had only acquired a single Immortal-rank magic after having become a Loose Immortal.

“Best to take things one step at a time.” Ning knew his own limits.

He left the Treasure Hall and headed out through a corridor.

The Treasure Hall was at the frontmost part of the corridor, while the Stellar Hall was at the rearmost.

The old black bull followed while speaking constantly. “The Stellar Hall contains within it miraculous profundities, and by training within it, it is much easier to gain insights into the Dao. If you aren’t careful, you’ll easily lose yourself in training...it seems as though in the outside world, you were rather frantic. I imagine you must have important business to attend to. Don’t let yourself become lost in meditating on the Dao within the Stellar Hall and delay your important affairs.

“Ah!” Ning was startled, then hurriedly said with gratitude, “Thank you for the reminder, senior.”

He had nearly caused himself to miss the critical affairs coming up!

Although meditating on the Dao was important, if he lost one or two days meditating on the Dao, by the time he woke up and left...it would all be too late.

“No matter what.” Ning instructed the old black bull. “As soon as the sky grows dark in the outside world, if I’m still in the Stellar Hall meditating

on the Dao, then I would like to ask you to immediately disrupt my meditation and awaken me, senior.”

“If the sky grows dark in the outside world? That means only twelve hours are remaining.” The old black bull said.

“Right, twelve hours! If I begin to meditate on the Dao...at most allow me to meditate on it for twelve hours.” Ning said hurriedly. “After twelve hours, immediately awaken me.”

Based on Ning’s calculations, generally peaking, Zifu Disciples who were flying on magic treasures would be able to travel a hundred thousand kilometers in a day. But of course, that was normal flight; if they didn’t rest and didn’t sleep and also didn’t worry about using up their elemental energy, one could fly nearly two hundred thousand kilometers in a day. Swallow Mountain, in turn, was only a few tens of kilometers in size...a roundtrip to see the other disciples of Snowdragon Mountain and return with them would take...

As Ji Ninefire had said, most likely just a day or two!

Ning would only be able to spend twelve hours meditating on the Dao. He absolutely couldn’t afford to go over!

“Don’t worry at all.” The old black bull raised his head, looking like a guard. “Once twelve hours pass, I will immediately awaken you! We spirits of magic treasure...will never forget tasks that are assigned.”

“Thank you, senior.” Ning laughed, then headed to the main entrance of the Stellar Hall.

It was different from the other three halls, which all had large bronze doors. The gate to the Stellar Hall was seemingly made out of wood, and it emanated an ancient, natural aura. The old black bull, seeing Ning inspect the towering wooden door, murmured to himself, “This is the Ageless Bluefire Wood which only exists in the Nine Hells. It is a precious, spiritual wood which is very useful in making Immortal-rank magic treasures, but it was used to make a large gate.”

“Is it possible to dismantle the gate?” Ning was curious.

“If it was, Immortal Juhua would have done so long ago.” The old black bull said, resigned. “This gate is part of the entire Aquatic Manor; it is part of the entire magic treasure. There’s no way to move it at all.”

Ning stroked the wooden gate. The wood was covered with a cold, abyssal light, but when touching it, it felt warm and gave off a comfortable sensation. Ning sighed emotionally...the Ageless Bluefire Wood which only the Nine Hells possessed? Alright, then...these were things which he had never even heard of before the old black bull had introduced it to him. He had experienced too little.

“This really is...” Passing through the corridor and through the wooden gate, Ning felt breathless. The sight in front of him completely stunned him. “This really is utterly inconceivable. The works of a god. The works of a god!”

In front of him, in the distance, was a large mountain. The mountain was filled with life, with a large number of trees and other vegetation growing everywhere. At the base of the mountain, the life suddenly disappeared; it was an area where virtually not a single inch of grass would grow. Only very occasionally, within a patch of strewn rocks, would one see a few strands of grass. At the base of the mountain, there was a straw hut.

In front of the straw hut, there was a creek. The creek flowed down from the mountain, and it winded downwards in a curvy path, constantly flowing. It was only in the area wherever the creek flowed that some wild grass could occasionally be seen. The other places were virtually all covered with wild, desolate stones.

In midair, there was one enormous, brilliant star after another. The starlight filled the world, causing every place to seem rather illusory.

“Can it be that this is an entire world?” Ning couldn’t help but say.

“It is its own dimension.” The old black bull followed him in and sighed, “This is a dimension which the first master created within the Stellar Hall! This dimension is connected with the gate of the Stellar Hall. Thus, when we stepped through it, we entered the special space. I’ve heard it said that

some great powers of the ancient past were able to create an entire dimension within a single grain of sand. The first master most likely had this ability as well.

Ning nodded.

Unfathomable! Although when he was young, he had heard of some legends, such as 'Houyi Shooting the Son' and other such legends, when had he ever seen them in person? After all, those things were a long, long distance away from him. As for creating a dimension? Generally speaking, people created a dimension, then an estate within their own dimension.

The Aquatic Manor was itself a separate dimension...but the secondary halls actually were able to once again merge with another dimension. Although Ning didn't understand it too well, he understood that accomplishing something like this was an incredible feat.

"I really wonder who the first owner of this Aquatic Manor was." Ning said to himself.

"Come, come, come. The 'treasure' is within the straw hut." The old black bull urged.

"The straw hut?" Ning strode forward by a few dozen paces, quickly arriving at the straw hut. The straw hut was at the base of the mountain, a seemingly very ordinary straw hat, and with stone furniture inside.

After entering the straw room...Ning was stunned. He saw that on the table of the straw room, there were multiple tomes, all of which were black. Ning couldn't recognize any of them, and so he opened one. On the surface of the books, there were some beautiful Fiendgod characters: [Stellar Scroll] [Stellar Scroll 2] [Stellar Scroll 3]....there were forty three scrolls in total.

"This is...?" Ning stared at these books.

The old black bull explained, "These are the manuals left behind by the first owner. The name of it is the 'Stellar Hall' and there are a total of forty three parts.

Ning lifted up the Stellar Scroll and flipped through it. The pages were

black, while the words were in golden Fiendgod script. The contents were rather puzzling as well...it felt like hastily scribbled notes! There were like casual recordings which described personal feelings! Ning originally had taken them to be profound books and was rather surprised.

“If you want to read!” The old black bull said hurriedly. “At a simple glance, there are no mysteries and nothing mysterious to the contents. But if you fully read everything...you will discover how extraordinary it is.”

“Oh?”

Ning, startled, picked up the [Stellar Scrolls].

“Go outside the room to read. Sit on that stone bench over there.” The old black bull said. “Read aloud!”

“But I don’t recognize Fiendgod characters.” Ning asked. Although he could recognize Fiendgod characters at first glance, and understood which human words matched each Fiendgod word, the two were different languages after all.

“Just use your own race’s language to read. That is what Immortal Juhua did in the past.” The old black bull said.

“Right.” Ning held the tome in his hand and walked out of the straw hut. He seated himself at the stone table, where the first master might have sat countless years ago and where Immortal Juhua might have sat as well.

Ning flipped open the book and began to read.

“Today, Chang came to pay his respects to me...” Ning began to read, puzzlement in his heart regarding these casual personal recordings.

His voice rang out.

Every single sound was very ordinary, but once the words were read out, the sound of the large number of words connected...in a manner that was like a song, capable of moving a person’s heart, causing pain, amazement, sorrow, and more. The sounds of these words were unfathomable; just by reading them out, the sound of these words seemed to contain a ringing, miraculous power...

Slowly, they drew Ning into a unique world.

When he became absorbed with seeing this world, Ning forgot that he was holding the [Stellar Scroll] in his hands. He stared at the countless stones of the desolate region, at the creek filled with life energy, as though seeing a pair of 'Daos'. Daos filled with boundless profundities. Even the small grass which was growing out carried another sort of Dao within it.

Ning raised his head.

The stars in the sky were brilliant. Each of them were incomparably bright, and they each gave Ning a different feeling. Suddenly...Ning stared at one particular star, one which caused Ning to feel familiar and intoxicated by it.

"Longing, warmth..."

Ning seemed to be once more lying on that little boat of his, drifting atop Serpentwing Lake.

He also seemed to be in his mother's arms...

That longing, that warmth...it filled his entire heart.

.....

The old black bull stared wide-eyed as it watched. "Truly inconceivable. This this this this...he actually completely read nearly the entire first scroll before halting? This Ji Ning really is at quite a high level of understanding. He was actually able to read so many characters. Most likely, he's become immersed on an extremely deep layer."

The old black bull understood this very well.

This book was nothing more than a sort of 'guide', guiding the consciousness of practitioners on an extremely deep level to gain certain insights. The more words one read, the deeper a level of insight gaining one would reach! But of course...how much one would gain from it would depend on how many experiences that person had built up normally in life. Good preparation was the key to success; only by normally accumulating experiences would one have sudden insights.

“Which star is he looking at?” The old black bull saw Ning raise his head to stare at the sky. He couldn’t help but feel curious “According to what Juhua said, every single star contains a different Dao.”

A calm smile was on Ning’s face, as though he were by the side of his mother.

That smile contained an inexhaustible charisma...when the old black bull saw Ning’s smile, he seemed to feel even his own heart grow warm.

This was a form of longing.

A mental warmth.

“Sword.” The old black bull stared.

Ning rose to his feet, leaving the stone table. He pressed his forefinger and middle finger together into the shape of a ‘sword’, then began to brandish them about in training swordplay within the Stellar Hall. This was a type of swordplay that contained inexhaustible, endless longing... Ning didn’t release any rays of sword-light, nor did he use any elemental energy; this was seemingly a very ordinary display of swordplay.

But it made the old black bull sense the boundless longing contained within it.

The old black bull was able to sense the surrounding Serpentwing Lake area. He knew that over the past few years, Ning had gained insights into many hints regarding the True Meaning of the Dao, the majority of which belonged to a longing-type sword intention.

“It changed.” The old black bull instantly saw how Ning’s swordplay had become purer.

“Rustle...”

In the area around Ning, who wasn’t using any elemental energy at all in executing this swordplay with just his fingers, suddenly appeared drops of rain. One drop of rain after another came to form, and they constantly fell. The rain fell nonstop, landing atop the scattered stones...and Ning, in the center of the rainstorm, was like the favored son of the rain, which



surrounded him and protected him.

“This this this...” The old black bull stared. “Accumulated effort which results in sudden rewards!”

The accumulated hints of insight into the True Meaning of the Dao which Ning had gained over the past five years, at this moment...finally made a qualitative breakthrough!

# Chapter 4: Rainwater Sword Domain

The raindrops were sprinkling downwards. Ji Ning, amidst the rain, was completely absorbed in his swordplay. His sword-fingers alone were able to execute a sword technique that activated the 'Dao'.

How comfortable.

Ning felt as though, in this moment, he himself had become a drop of rainwater! He was swirling about, playing and jesting with the other droplets of rain, and joining with them to form a single strand of it. That sort of interconnected-ness and mutual affection...caused the countless drops of rain to all join together.

"Rustle...." The sprinkling rain surrounding Ning transformed into countless drops of rain which transformed into a drizzling rain. The countless crystalline strands of rain appeared all the more mesmerizing.

Swish! Swish! Swish!

Every single strand of rain seemed to secretly be like a knife.

"Rumble..." The rain grew heavier and heavier, transforming into a tempest. The tempest seemed incomparably ferocious, and Ning's swordplay carried a ferocious, unstoppable power as well.

.....

The old black bull stared, stupefied. Rain drops, rain drizzle, tempest... and in the end, the rainwater once more transformed into that sprinkling, drizzling rain.

One line of rain after another...they seemed like incomparably precious, crystalline jade sculptures that were carved into thin lines. They were also like the hands of a mother, gently stroking down.

Finally, Ning came to a halt.

"This...is Dao?" Ning murmured to himself.

"Congratulations, Ji Ning." The old black bull's mouth was hanging wide open, and he was incomparably excited. "You have already truly immersed

yourself into the Dao, truly and complete. The feeling of becoming part of the Dao itself is very marvelous, isn't it?"

Ning nodded gently.

Just now, that feeling had indeed been incredible. He was like a pearl of water, a droplet of rain! In that instant, he felt incomparably familiar to and close with the rainwater. Ning understood...that he had developed his own Dao. The Dao of Rainwater!

"Over the past five years, you have gained insights into many strands of the True Meaning of the Dao. Your accumulated insights have allowed you to break through to a new threshold, with the final result being that you have gained a 'Dao Domain'." The old black bull sighed in praise.

"Dao Domain?" Ning looked puzzled. "What is that?"

The old black bull said, astonished, "You don't even know this?"

"No idea." Ning said honestly.

The old black bull sighed, shaking his head. "Your clan really is an ordinary one. You don't even have a basic understanding of the different levels of insight. I'll tell you, then. In training, one aspect is improving on a technical level; be it sword, saber, spear, or even painting and music and other artistic endeavors, technique matters. The first level is the 'foundation'! Which is to say, becoming familiar with the basic techniques of an art. The second level is the 'advanced' level; it represents that you have all but perfected your mastery of the techniques. The third level is 'one with the world'; this represents that you are already getting close to the 'Dao', and have begun to attune to heaven's will."

Ning listened. Naturally, he knew about these first three levels.

"After 'one with the world', the next step is in attuning with the intricacies of the natural world, and slowly discovering one of the 'Daos'. Once you discover it! You will have gained a hint of the 'True Meaning of the Dao'. That is the fourth level; 'True Meaning of the Dao'." The old black bull shook his head. "It is very hard to gain insight into a 'True Meaning of the Dao'. Even some Zifu Disciples aren't capable of doing it."

When Ning had been meditating on the Dao by the side of the pool that year, he gained his first insight into a 'True Meaning of the Dao'.

"Afterwards, when you continue to gain insight and continuously accumulate many more hints of the 'True Meaning of the Dao', your insights into the Dao will grow greater and greater. There will then come a day when the many hints of the 'True Meaning of the Dao' will coalesce and then transform qualitatively. Only then will you truly be able to become one with the Dao itself, to the point where, with but a thought, you can summon the power of the Dao in your surroundings, to form it into your own Domain. This is the fifth level; 'Dao Domain'. This is the level you are currently at. Formidable, formidable." The old black bull sighed. "Only very few Wanxiang Adepts are capable of reaching this level; generally speaking, only people at the Primordial Daoist level are capable of reaching this level of insight into the Dao."

"Oh? I'm that amazing?" Ning said with a laugh.

"Your innate talents are extremely high, especially your talents as pertain to the sword. You are an absolute monster! With the assistance of the Stellar Hall, at the young age of 16, you've actually reached this level!" The old black bull said.

Ning understood as well.

He possessed the [Nuwa Painting] and was incomparably hard-working. He also had an innately high comprehension ability, and also the Aquatic Estate...there were many variables which contributed to him being able to achieve what he had.

"And above the Dao Domain?" Ning asked.

"Above it..." The old black bull looked at Ning. "Reaching the 'Dao Domain' level, after all, just means that you are able to completely immerse yourself into the Dao. What you need to do is to gain greater insights into this Dao of yours, with the end result being that one day, you will have completely understood and mastered this entire Dao Path! That is the sixth level; completely understanding an entire Dao Path!"

Ning now began to understand.

Indeed, just now, he had completely immersed himself with the rainwater, but that was nothing more than immersion; he was still far off from being able to completely control the 'Dao of Rainwater'.

"The first level is the 'basic' level. The second is 'advanced'. The third is 'one with the world'. The fourth is 'True Meaning of the Dao'. The fifth is 'Dao Domain'. The sixth is a complete 'Dao Path'!" The old black bull said solemnly. "The level of comprehension and enlightenment one possesses is very important. Only by having sufficient comprehension will one's power increase. Otherwise, there is no way you'll be able to withstand and control great power."

"To become a Celestial Immortal, you have to completely control a Dao Path!" The old black bull looked at Ning. "For example, Immortal Juhua had been a Loose Immortal for millions of years, and had completely mastered nine full Dao Paths. But so what if he did? The increasingly powerful Three Calamities, Nine Tribulations still caused him to fall in the end. Anyone who becomes a Loose Immortal is guaranteed to fall."

Ning sighed as well.

"You train in the sword, and have reached the level of 'Dao Domain'. Generally speaking, your Domain will be referred to as a 'Sword Domain.'" The old black bull reminded. "Just based on the fact that you have a Sword Domain, countless major sects will swing open their doors for you to join."

"Sword Domain?" Ning said softly. "This Dao is the Dao of Rainwater. Let my Sword Domain therefore be known as the 'Rainwater Sword Domain', then."

Ning looked at his surroundings.

Rustle...

Rainwater appeared out of nowhere, sprinkling downwards and swirling about him. Every single line of rain also seemed like an incomparably sharp arrow, enough to slice apart hard mountain stones or steel.

"Let me warn you. Just now, when you immersed yourself into the Sword Domain, eight hours went past in the outside world." The old black bull

said.

“Eight hours?” Ning was startled. “I really didn’t have any sense of time passing when I was immersed in the Dao. Right, Elder. Now that I have my Rainwater Sword Domain...if I were to challenge the first level of the Wargod Hall, do I have a chance?”

The old black bull was stunned. “The first level of the Wargod Hall? Right, you can give it a try!”

Ning laughed.

Even if the old black bull hadn’t said anything, Ning would have still gone and given it a try, because a Fiendgod practitioner only had two chances at each level of power to challenge the Wargod Hall. He had already reached the peak of power as a Xiantian Fiendgod, and would most likely soon break through to the Zifu level. If he didn’t use the two options he had at the Xiantian level, they would go to waste once he reached the Zifu level.

“Let’s go. I want to see how formidable this Wargod Hall is.” Ning was extremely eager and deeply desired to successfully make it through, so as to be able to go to the Treasure Hall to select a treasure!

The treasures of the Treasure Hall were all left behind by the first master.

Even the Mortal-ranked magic treasures were most likely extraordinary, and might be of great benefit for the Ji clan’s battle against Snowdragon Mountain.

“Snowdragon Mountain.” Ning murmured in his heart...

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It was already dark, and Zifu Disciple ‘Muse’ of the Swallow Mountain branch of Snowdragon Mountain had flown without stopping at all for tens of thousands of kilometers to arrive at this place. Like a ray of light, he charged downwards to an estate below.

Below was a large, towering mountain. The name of the mountain was

Landwyrn Mountain.

“Human practitioner, immediately depart.”

“Human practitioner, you actually dare invade our Landwyrn Mountain? Are you looking to die?”

As Muse descended towards Landwyrn Mountain on his flying treasure, some of the Greater Monsters of Landwyrn Mountain began to curse angrily. Landwyrn Mountain was a powerful force, and the top of the mountain was an ancient Zifu-level monster who had trained for a thousand years, ‘Landwyrn’. Landwyrn was a Godbeast, and as a Zifu-level Godbeast, one could imagine how powerful this old monster was.

Naturally, he commanded a large group of Greater Monsters, and this was forbidden grounds for humans.

A Zifu-level ancient monster, and with the lineage of a Godbeast. These two things guaranteed that many Zifu Disciples would be frightened of him.

“Senior apprentice-brother Jadechild, your junior apprentice-brother Muse requests a meeting.” Muse didn’t pay any attention to those Greater Monsters, flying straight to the top of Landwyrn Mountain before speaking.

“Groooooooooowl.”

An enormous draconic head suddenly emerged from a cave at the top of the mountain. That azure draconic head had a single horn atop it, and its wheel-sized eyes stared towards Muse. The incomparable aura alone the draconic head emanated...caused Muse to feel nervous. He knew very well that he wasn’t a match at all for this Landwyrn in front of him.”

The Landwyrn before him was a peak Zifu monster, with the lineage of a Godbeast.

“My respects, Daoist friend Landwyrn.” Muse bowed.

“Master hates to be disturbed. Can it be that you do not know this?” The Landwyrn growled.

“There’s something major happening.” Muse said hurriedly. “I have major news to report to senior apprentice-brother Jadechild, news which will be of great benefit to him.”

Jadechild...

Out of the many people which the Swallow Mountain branch of Snowdragon Mountain were inviting over, he was the most important person. As Dong Ziqi and Muse saw it, as long as they were able to invite their fellow apprentice, Jadechild, that was enough; he alone could easily annihilate the Ji clan by himself. Actually, just by looking at this spirit-beast, the Landwurm, which Jadechild controlled, one could imagine how powerful Jadechild was.

It must be understood that Zifu-level spirit-beasts were extremely rare.

Although many human experts had some Greater Monsters as spirit-beasts, that was because there were a fairly high number of humans with the insights necessary to break through to the Zifu level. But for a spirit-beast to break through to the Zifu level was much rarer! Ancient Zifu-level monsters generally weren’t willing to serve, and if they were willing to serve, it was generally only experts. Even if they served a weakling, a powerful expert would soon seize them!

Dong Ziqi. Muse. Ji Ninefire. None of them had a Zifu-level spirit-beast.

“You wish to see me?” A deep, powerful voice rang out, and a muscular man with long, loose azure hair, a pair of tiger-like eyes, and black clothes moved out from one side.

“My respects, senior apprentice-brother.” Muse hurriedly bowed respectfully.

“I’ve seen you before. You are Muse.” Jadechild looked at him. “Can it be that you aren’t aware that I am in closed door training in an attempt to make a breakthrough?”

Muse felt his heart tremble.

He knew exactly how terrifying this senior apprentice-brother Jadechild of his was. Jadechild was a Fiendgod Body Refiner who had reached the



peak of the Zifu level! In addition, Jadechild had also learned the divine ability, 'Heavenly Transformation'. A peak Zifu-level Fiendgod practitioner was already very frightening; being in possession of a divine ability meant they could fight someone at a higher level than themselves.

Dong Ziqi himself was nervous in front of this fellow apprentice, Jadechild. He was the most important person they were inviting on this venture.

"Senior apprentice-brother Jadechild." Muse said hurriedly. "I know that you are in closed door training and don't like to be disturbed. However, not too far from here, at the nearby Swallow Mountain, we've discovered a large-scale elemental ore mine, with very many high quality elemental stones. The mine has a circumference of four thousand kilometers and a depth of three hundred kilometers."

"What!" Jadechild, who had been very calm up to now, suddenly had his eyes explode with two rays of golden light. "Your words are true?"

"If I've deceived you, senior apprentice-brother Jadechild, you can go ahead and kill me with one palm blow."

# Chapter 5: A Wooden Stake

“I imagine you wouldn’t dare deceive me.” Jadechild nodded slightly.

Muse said hurriedly, “Although we have discovered this enormous elemental ore mine, this elemental ore mine is within the territory of the Ji clan. The puny Ji clan wasn’t worth fearing, and our Swallow Mountain branch should have been able to easily exterminate it, but...” Muse explained what had happened afterwards.

Jadechild frowned as he listened. “A bewildering formation?”

“Right. Ji clan’s Patriarch, Ji Ninefire, is skilled in formations and poisons.” Muse said hurriedly. “This time, we have invited all our colleagues to go deal with the Ji clan. The Ji clan’s strength isn’t worth fearing. Only, in formations...”

“If they set a great formation...” Jadechild frowned. “Since we are not skilled in formations, they can easily delay for a long period of time. Once enough time passes, the Darcian Dynasty’s Angel will most likely arrive! Of the formation experts close to the Swallow Mountain region...there is a junior apprentice-brother named ‘Nongdao’. If we can invite that fellow apprentice, the formations that a small clan like the Ji clan is capable of using will easily be broken!”

Muse nodded hurriedly. “We have invited fellow apprentice Nongdao as well. Now that you, senior apprentice-brother Jadechild, have spoken, I imagine Nongdao will go as well.”

“Hurry and go invite junior apprentice-brother Nongdao.” Jadechild instructed. “I will go to your Swallow Mountain region right now.”

“Thank you, senior apprentice-brother.” Muse was overjoyed.

“Mm. Go.” Jadechild instructed.

A green leaf-type magic treasure suddenly appeared beneath Muse’s feet, and then he transformed into a ray of light, disappearing into the horizon.

Jadechild stared into the distance, silent for some time.

“Landwyrn.” Jadechild turned and shouted.

“Master.” An azure scale covered, horned Landwyrn clambered out. This Landwyrn had four claws, and was an imposing, majestic site. Currently, his body was rapidly shrinking, until he was only ten meters long.

“Come, follow me to Swallow Mountain.” Jadechild said softly. “If we render major merits this time, perhaps we can use the opportunity to ask the main sect to assist me in making a breakthrough.”

Jadechild was something of a rogue practitioner. He had reached the Zifu level as a Ki Refiner long ago, but the technique he had used to train in Ki was a fairly superficial one. This made it so that it was almost impossible for him to break through to become a Wanxiang Adept as a Ki Refiner! Afterwards, he slowly trained as a Fiendgod Refiner until he broke through to the Zifu level as well...he could be considered a talented figure, which is why he was accepted into Snowdragon Mountain!

Unfortunately, he was already a late-stage Ki Refiner. There was no way back for him, and it was too late to change to a different technique.

Fortunately, the long amount of time he had spent in training resulted in him developing a fierce, decisive temperament. After accomplishing a major deed, he was viewed upon favorably by the main sect, and he was given a divine ability, ‘Heavenly Transformation’. This caused his status to rise once more.

Nowadays...

He always stayed in closed-door training, because he wanted his Fiendgod body to breakthrough to the Wanxiang level! Only, each major increase in level was too difficult. Although the main sect did indeed have methods by which the chances of breakthroughs could increase, the price was great; why would they be willing to help him?”

“You will definitely succeed, Master.” The Landwyrn crawled out.

Jadechild sat on the Landwyrn’s back.

Whoosh!

Clouds appeared beneath the feet of the Landwyrm, and it immediately flew into the distant horizons. All dragons were naturally capable of controlling water, and although this one was only at the Zifu level...it was still able to summon the clouds and fly on them.

Within the ancient Aquatic Manor.

Ji Ning and the old black bull were walking shoulder-to-shoulder out of the Stellar Hall.

“It is indeed much faster to train and gain insights in the Stellar Hall.” Ning sighed in praise.

“The Stellar Hall is effective in assisting one in comprehension.” The old black bull said. “But in the end, it still depends on your normal accumulated experiences. Only after you experience many things will you gain many insights. Normally, you randomly accumulate many different experiences...and you yourself won’t even notice it, but once you enter the Stellar Hall and begin to train in gaining further insights, you will improve greatly. But without those normal, everyday experiences...if you stay all the time in the Stellar Hall, it will be pointless.”

Ning nodded.

As the saying went, read ten thousand books, then go on an actual journey of ten thousand kilometers. Personal experiences and insights were what mattered most.

“We’re at the Wargod Hall.” The old black bull stood in front of the Wargod Hall. The bronze gate of the Wargod Hall had the carves of a waraxe and a spear above it, and a martial aura emanated forth from it. In addition, the entire bronze gate was covered with a faint layer of red light, which carried within it an aura of slaughter.

Ning held his breath.

“Senior.” Ning hurriedly asked. “In the past, what did Immortal Juhua experience when he passed the first level of the Wargod Hall?”

“No point in asking.” The old black bull shook its head. “The dangers of the first level of the Wargod Hall are arranged on the fly. They can change

at any time. The spirit of the manor and I learned this long ago.”

“Oh.” Ning was resigned.

The old black bull said hurriedly, “Be careful. Although the tests of the Wargod Hall are meant to sharpen your skills and not to kill you, and although you are a Fiendgod practitioner and have a low chance of dying inside, the tests always have an element of danger! Don’t lose your life.”

“Don’t worry.” Ning pushed aside the giant bronze gate and strode inside.

As soon as his hands touched the bronze gate.

“Whoosh!”

The blurry red light on the surface of the bronze gate instantly sucked Ning inside. Ning disappeared into thin air from in front of the bronze gate, and in the instant in which he was drawn within, Ning’s eyes instantly became round and filled with shock.

“Oh, I forgot to tell you that entering the Wargod Hall is a matter of direct teleportation.” The old black bull, seeing the stupefied look on Ning’s face, stared back at him with his own ox-eyes, then began to laugh...

In the blink of an eye, they arrived at a vast, empty land. The ground was covered with ground that seemed to be stained with blood. Up ahead, there was a majestic tower, and the door to the tower glowed with a faint white light.

“Hm?” Ning immediately saw the giant yellow bear standing not too far away.

“Senior.” Ning hurriedly paid his respects.

The giant yellow bear nodded slightly. His formerly uncaring expression seemed to have softened significantly, and his attitude had become much nicer as well. “For you to have reached the level of ‘Dao Domain’ at the age of five is fairly rare, even amongst Fiendgods. Tell me, which level of the Wargod Hall do you intend to challenge?”

“I can choose?” Ning was amazed.

“Of course you can choose! For example, when the Aquatic Manor’s owner is outside adventuring, if he returns at the Primordial Daoist level, and he only has two options to challenge the tower, he naturally won’t choose the first level.” The giant yellow bear said. “You can, if you choose, go directly to the highest level of the Wargod Hall, level ten. But of course, even though the Wargod Hall’s tests aren’t meant to kill the testers, even the slightest energy ripple at that level will cause you to instantly disintegrate, leaving not even your soul.”

Ning rubbed his eyes.

Fine, then.

Level ten?

Even Immortal Juhua only passed level seven after becoming a Loose Immortal! He couldn’t even imagine how difficult the tenth level was. Ning only felt as though the original, ancient Fiendgod who had created this Aquatic Manor was simply too powerful.

“I choose the first level.” Ning said honestly. Based on what the old black bull had said, before he had mastered his Rainwater Sword Domain, his chances of succeeding on the first level were less than 10%. One could imagine how difficult the first level was.

“Fine.” The giant yellow bear nodded. “At least you are doing things step-by-step. This is your first challenge, and this test will be the easiest of tests.”

“Easiest?” Ning was stunned.

The giant yellow bear’s furry paws suddenly grabbed Ning by the arm. Whoosh! Instantly, Ning and the giant yellow bear arrived at the majestic tower. The tower gate glowed with blurry white light as Ning and the giant yellow bear stepped inside with a single step.

This was a blurry white space that was three thousand meters high and with a circumference of many thousands of meters. The only thing present was that floating door behind them.

“This is the first level of the Wargod Hall.” The giant yellow bear said. Ning immediately looked carefully at his surroundings. The first level of the Wargod Hall? Then where was the dangerous test?

“Look.” The giant yellow bear stood there, pointing into the distance.

Ning followed the giant yellow bear’s finger with his gaze. He saw that out of nowhere, a black wooden stake had suddenly appeared. The wooden stake was as thick as Ning’s legs, and was three meters tall. It just stood there.

“A wooden stake?” Ning was stunned.

“The test that I’ll give you is significantly easier than the test which I originally gave Immortal Juhua or Rampart.” The giant yellow bear said. “The first test of the Wargod Hall is...in the time it takes for a single incense stick to burn up, split that wooden stake apart!” The giant yellow bear’s palm suddenly had an incense stick within it, only roughly one foot long.

“Shatter the wooden stake before the incense stick burns up?” Ning looked at the wooden stake.

No wonder the spirit of the manor said that this was the easiest test. It was even easier than the one which Juhua and Rampart had to undergo! Indeed, it was just a matter of splitting a wooden stake. There wasn’t any danger at all. In addition, the wooden stake just stood there, not resisting at all.

“Begin.” The giant yellow bear said. That incense stick appeared on the floor not too far away, already lit.

“A single incense stick...”

Ning didn’t dare to waste any time.

Ning, with a ‘swoosh’, scurried before the wooden stake. Although it was only a wooden stake, blindly striking it was just foolishness. It was better to spend some time to first analyze it...and see where the wooden stake would more easily break apart. Only by knowing one’s self and one’s enemies would one have hope for victory. This wooden stake was

completely black, and it had circles of characters covering it.

“Would it be easier to follow the pattern of the runes in striking it?” Ning said to himself.

“Haaargh!”

The Darknorth Swords appeared in Ning’s hands, and the divine power in his Zifu completely exploded forth. Whoooooooooosh. Drizzling rain appeared in the surrounding area. The drizzling rain merged into lines of rain which swirled about the area, making it quite comfortable and cool. This also clearly caused Ning’s control over the surrounding ‘Dao’ to become much more powerful.

“Rain Line!” Ning used his most powerful attack at the very start!

Whoosh!

Ning’s swords flashed like lightning, disappearing into thin air as they completely merged into the surrounding, billowing lines of rain. Ning’s sword light transformed into one of the strands of rain, as thin as silk, incomparably sharp, instantly chopping towards the wooden stake.

“Bang!” The only thing which occurred was a white smudge appeared on the wooden stake. As the rainwater fell down, the white smudge disappeared, as though nothing had happened.

Ning himself, because of the powerful counterforce, knocked backwards, and the palm of his hands split open. He took three step backwards, but instantly the wound to his palm was healed.

“Just a white smudge. This wooden stake is indeed incomparably tough. To break it in the time it takes for an incense stick to burn is very hard.” Ning instantly charged forward and gave it another blow.

It, too, was ‘Rain Line’.

The sword merged into the lines of rain...

Bang!

As soon as it touched the wooden stake, a powerful concussive sound once more rang out, but this time, Ning chopped in accordance with the



magical runes. Although he was still knocked backwards by the collisive force, Ning found to his surprised delight...that there was a hint of a very small wound on the wooden stake. The wound was very small, almost negligible, but it was still there.

“I imagine that by using this sword strike with my Rainwater Sword Domain...the power is comparable to the ninth level of the Lesser Thousand Swords Formation. But this is all I can accomplish?” Ning was stunned. “Without the Rainwater Sword Domain, I really wouldn’t be able to do anything to it.”

Ning knew very well that within the Rainwater Sword Domain, he was like a tiger who had been given wings; the power of his sword technique had risen by several levels.”

# Chapter 6: A Bewildering Selection of Magic Treasures

The distant giant yellow bear nodded slightly and mused to himself, “This Ji Ning’s talent for swordplay is indeed high. That sword blow alone has already just barely reached the Wanxiang Adept level. But if that’s all he has, there is no way he will be able to overcome this first trial. His blows needs to reach the power of a full-force blow from an early Wanxiang Adept...only then will he be able to break the wooden stake before a single incense stick burns down!”

The first level of the Wargod Hall required that a person have the attack power of an early Wanxiang Adept in order to be overcome!

This was already the easiest testing method which the spirit of the manor could select. A true test would also test a person’s battle experience, mentality, movement abilities, and many other aspects. After all, in a true battle against a real enemy, would the enemy just stand there like a block of wood, waiting for someone to split it apart?

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“Even by using my Rainwater Sword Domain, my Darknorth Swords aren’t able to split this wooden stake.” Ning immediately retracted his Darknorth Swords.

“Lesser Ten Thousand Swords Formation.”

Ning retreated by thirty meters, and then out of nowhere, more than seven hundred sword-type magic treasures suddenly appeared. All of the magic swords glowed with a blurry white light, and powerful Zifu-level elemental energy filled each magic sword...after circulating through, the power condensed next to Ning, into the form of an incomparably fierce sword light.

This sword light could faintly be seen to have the form of a flying sword.

“Originally, when I fought against Dong Ziqi, I activated these swords with peak Xiantian-level energy. Now that I use Zifu-level elemental

energy to activate them, the power of the Lesser Ten Thousand Swords Formation is clearly much enhanced.” Ning could sense the sharpness of this sword light. This sword light’s own power was most likely comparable to the earlier, full-strength close-combat blow he delivered.

“Rainwater Sword Domain!”

A drizzling rain suddenly appeared around him as the area within three hundred meters sank into his Rainwater Sword Domain.

“Go.” Ning willed it, and the sword light by his side instantly vanished, transforming into a line of rain as well. This line of rain instantly traversed the distance of thirty meters, slicing down in the direction of the runes covering the wooden stake.

Boom!

A wound immediately appeared atop the wooden stake, as the sword light chopped in nearly to the depth of half a finger.

“Good.” Ning was overjoyed, and another ray of sword light formed by his side.

Swish! Swish! Swish! Swish! Swish! Swish!

One ray of sword light after another flew into and completely merged with Rainwater Sword Domain, transforming into thin lines of rainwater. The rainwater sliced directly downwards onto the distant wooden stakes, once more leaving behind wounds.. It must be understood that the wooden stake was harder to cut on the inside than on the outside...the elemental energy within Ning’s Zifu was quickly being used up, as the wound on the wooden stake grew greater and greater.

Some time later.

“BANG!” A line of rain sliced across the wooden pillar, and the wooden stake snapped in half. The upper half of the wooden stake fell, descending down to and smashing against the ground.

“Success.” Ning rejoiced. He hurriedly turned his head to look at the incense stick behind him. A majority of the incense stick was already

gone.

“Congratulations on succeeding.” The giant yellow bear walked across. “Do you wish to challenge the second level of the Wargod Hall?”

Ning was swayed.

The second level?

It seemed as though succeeding on the second level of the Wargod Hall only resulted in a Mortal-ranked magic treasure. The benefit was the same as successfully passing the first level. The difficulty level...

“Senior, how hard is the second level, compared to the first level?” Ning asked. “How is the danger level?”

“Of course it is much more dangerous.” The giant yellow bear said directly. “You overcame the simplest first level test. But from the second level onwards...it won’t be that simple. It won’t be like just now, where there was only a block of wood that wouldn’t fight back. In addition, I won’t give you any advice at all. All you can do is charge in! Fight! If you feel you are in danger of death, you can immediately use the control talisman to teleport out. Once you teleport out, it means you lost!”

“Are you willing to use your second chance to challenge the second level of the Wargod Hall?” The giant yellow bear looked at Ning.

“My second chance?” Ning was stunned.

The giant yellow bear said, “I recommend you to use it. You are already at the peak as a Fiendgod Body Refiner. You might break through at any moment, and if you do...the two chances you have as a Xiantian-level expert will be gone. If you don’t use it, it will go to waste.”

Ning pondered for a moment.

“Then I will try it.” Ning laughed.

“Go then.” The giant yellow bear said.

Whoosh!

Ning disappeared from this first level of the Wargod Hall.

But just ten seconds later.

“Bang!” Ning once more appeared at the first level, flying backwards and falling against the the floor. The furs on his body were all torn apart, and there were multiple bloody wounds on him, although some of them healed by the time he landed on the ground.

“You lost.” The giant yellow bear looked at Ning.

“Success in either the first or the second level results in just a single Mortal-ranked magic treasure.” Ning rose to his feet and said angrily. The furs on his body automatically repaired themselves. “Why is the second level so difficult?”

As soon as he had entered, he had instantly been attacked by tens of strange beasts which looked like black panthers. He was caught rather off-guard, and only after he released his power did he realize that every single black panther was comparable to Dong Ziqi! He used everything available to him, but was only able to hold on for ten seconds before being forced to give up. If he didn’t give up, he would have been torn into pieces by that group of black panthers.

“The Wargod Hall has ten levels, each of which is increasingly difficult.” The giant yellow bear growled. “This was decided by Master. There’s no point to you complaining.”

“Is there no difference between passing through the second level and the first level?” Ning asked.

“There is a difference.”

The giant yellow bear said. “As you have passed the first level, I will give you a large number of Mortal-ranked magic treasures and items of comparable value for you to choose from! Some of them are top-grade Mortal-ranked magic treasures.”

“If you succeed in challenging the second level, you can choose from any of the Mortal-ranked magic treasures or items of equivalent value which the Treasure Hall holds. There are some very unusual, very unique items there...although they are only Mortal-ranked, they are comparable to some

ordinary Earth-ranked magic treasures, or even more valuable.”

Ning now understood.

“Go, then. Go to the Treasure Hall.” The giant yellow bear stretched out a furry paw, grabbing Ning by the arm.

Whoosh!

The two disappeared into thin air...

The Treasure Hall.

The Treasure Hall was an enormous hall, and high above in the air floated one magic treasure and unique item after another. Surges of tremendous power rippled forth...although these ripples were heart-shaking, they were controlled by the restrictive spells of the first master, and didn't injure Ning at all as he stood down below, preparing to make his selection.

“There are many magic treasures and unique items.” The giant yellow bear looked down towards Ning. Within the bear's palms, a golden book suddenly appeared. “This golden book has recorded within it magic treasures of the Mortal-rank. You can choose from them. Choose.”

Ning accepted the golden book.

The book only had two Fiendgod characters atop it: [Precious Treasures]. He opened the book, and atop the pages were diagrams of precious treasures and unique items, as well as descriptions of the items.

“This really is...” Ning was stupefied as he read.

“Compared with the magic treasures up above me, the treasures which the Zifu Disciples of my Swallow Mountain region are just dogshit.” Ning had a feeling of speechlessness. It was as though he was a farmer militia who encountered a formal military. The equipment was on a completely different level.

The magic treasures above him were, at very least, high-grade Mortal-rank! Most were top-grade Mortal-rank!

The Mortal-rank magic treasures the first master was willing to keep

naturally were all fine items.

“Whew.”

“These Tri-Poison Flags are too vicious. With them, a peak Zifu Disciple can fight head on against a Wanxiang Adept. The power is most likely no weaker than that of a completed form of the Myriad Wraiths Banner which Bei Zishan was working on. In addition, the Myriad Wraiths Banner needs countless people to be tortured to death, but these Tri-Poison Flags don’t require you to commit such grave sins.” Ning sighed in amazement.

The evil Daos also had their own incredible magic treasures. It wasn’t always necessary for one to commit any sins, yet still allowed items of incredible power to be made.

“This one is formidable as well. The Nine Yang Swords Formation?” Ning’s eyes blazed as he looked at it. The most alluring part of it was that this magic treasure was formed from nine flying swords, each of which was a high-grade Mortal-rank flying sword!

“The Nine Yang Swords Formation is the most suited for you.” The nearby giant yellow bear said. “Choosing this magic treasure is equivalent to choosing nine flying swords. Although they are only high-grade Mortal-rank flying swords, they come from the same source. If you use these nine flying swords as the a base core for your [Lesser Thousand Swords Formation], the power of it will increase threefold or fivefold! These nine high-grade Mortal-rank flying swords alone are worth more than several dozen of your ordinary Mortal-rank flying swords.”

Ning felt desirous as well.

This was an excellent item.

“Yin Fire Bottle?” Ning raised an eyebrow. “How vicious.”

“Fire-Water Mixed Element Staff.” Ning felt his pulse race when looking at this one as well. He controlled fire and water, and was also a Fiendgod Body Refiner. The Fire-Water Mixed Element Staff was very suited for Fiendgods.

“Divine Starpoint Needles? Thirty six needles in a set? My soul is

powerful, making it very suited for controlling large numbers of items.” Ning desired these as well.

One magic item after another.

Even the ones that weren’t suited for him made him feel desirous. These were all top-grade indeed! Top-grade! He had killed Bei Zishan and Ju San and acquired some magic treasures, but compared to these...there was no way to compare! Ning would be willing to trade dozens of magic treasures like those for a single one of these.

What Ning didn’t understand was that these items were viewed by the first master as ‘top-grade’ or ‘high-grade’, but if they were to be ranked in the modern era, all of them would be viewed as top-grade! Even those nine flying swords of the Nine Yang Sword Formation...according to modern standards, they would be viewed as nine top-grade flying swords.

“Wonderful.” Ning felt his heart itch.

He really wanted to grab a pile of them.

Ning began to understand Immortal Juhua a bit better. The poor Immortal Juhua could see all these powerful magic treasures, but couldn’t obtain them! If he could pick one as he pleased, he probably would’ve been able to survive his tribulation and become a Celestial Immortal!

Although the first master wanted to help future generations, he didn’t show them any favoritism. Even if the future generations died...his rules were still unbreakable. You want magic treasures? Then follow the first master’s rules.

“An ice-sealed Three-Eyed Firebug Larva? It can be used to raise an entire race of Three-Eyed Firebugs. An ordinary adult Three-Eyed Firebug is comparable to a Zifu Disciple? The only flaw is that it requires a large amount of spirit materials as food, and it also takes a long time to grow. However, it can also result in the breeding of incredibly powerful Three-Eyed Firebugs.” Ning’s heart burned.

“A golem comparable to an ordinary early Wanxiang Adept? An unkillable golem? The only flaw is that it requires a large amount of



elemental energy to be used.”

Magic treasures. Unique items.

Each of them drove Ning crazy and moved him.

“Don’t be dazzled.” The giant yellow bear warned. “The Nine Yang Swords Formation is the most suitable for you. Nine excellent swords which come from the same source...it will be very hard for you to find something like them while adventuring outside. Your [Lesser Thousand Swords Formation] needs a core, and the stronger the swords of its core, the better.”

Ning flipped through another page.

Formation techniques? Ning’s eyelids shot up. Right now, the Ji clan was under tremendous threat. The best method for dealing with a large group of Zifu Disciples was using formations! It was formations which could create miracles!

“Netherwyrms Heavenlock Formation. A large formation suitable for guarding a clan or a sect. A large formation formed from five component formations...” Ning was moved as soon as he read through this. He hurriedly read through it carefully, and the joy on his face became even greater.

“This is it, this is it!” Ning was howling in his heart. “With this, my power will greatly increase, and the power of the Patriarch and the others will increase as well.”

# Chapter 7: The Ji Clan Gathers

Seeing this major formation that was could be used to guard an entire clan or sect, Ji managed to suppress his excitement and continue reading, despite the fact that he was mentally howling in excitement.

Perhaps there would be something even better!

Ji Ning continued to flip through this golden book, and one magic treasure after another appeared, causing Ning's heart to clench repeatedly! It was really...really breathtaking. Unfortunately, he couldn't acquire them all! He only could choose a single item.

"[Soaring Serpent Formation Loop of the Nine Heavens!]" Ning's eyes lit up as he carefully inspected the descriptions within. "This formation is even more complicated than the Netherwyrms Heavenlock Formation, and the power is actually even greater. Still, it seems it needs nine users who are at least be at the Zifu Disciple level."

Ning shook his head.

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"Whew." Ning closed the golden book. The item which was most suitable for the current Ji clan was naturally a formation technique! There were several that were comparable to the Netherwyrms Heavenlock Formation, and two that were even better than it. But from the current situation, the most suitable, realistic choice was still the Netherwyrms Heavenlock Formation!

The Netherwyrms Heavenlock Formation was formed from five component formations, each of which a single Zifu Disciple could control. However, if five Zifu Disciples joined forces...the power of the Netherwyrms Heavenlock Formation would reach the maximum level!

As for the Ji clan, including Ning's father, it had six Zifu Disciples! But his father would have to use a forbidden technique to release enough power. Strictly speaking, the Ji clan only had five Zifu Disciples. Given this...the Netherwyrms Heavenlock Formation was the best choice.

“Have you chosen?” The giant yellow bear said.

“I have.” Ning nodded. “The Netherwyrms Heavenlock Formation!”

The giant yellow bear stared at Ning in astonishment. “Netherwyrms Heavenlock Formation? Did you make a mistake? That is a grand formation suitable for protecting a clan; once you set it down, you cannot move. Even if you choose to fight...you still have to set the formation up in advance! In the future, you will definitely go adventuring outside. If you suddenly encounter any danger, you won’t have time to set up a formation, and what’s more, the power of this grand formation when a single person is controlling is very ordinary. You need five people working together to reach a high level of power! I urge you to reconsider. You will have very, very few chances to select an item from the Treasure Hall. Once you make the choice, there’s no way to change it!”

“I choose it.” Ning didn’t hesitate at all.

“Fine.” The giant yellow bear said nothing further.

“Come.”

The giant yellow bear pointed at a spot in the air far above them, and in the tightly clustered mass of treasures and artifacts, a ray of light flew out from an unassuming dark corner that couldn’t even be seen with the naked eye. It was like a meteor, quickly passing through all obstructions and landing on the ground.

Ning looked at it. He saw four black scales that surrounded a central black pearl.

“This is a dragon pearl.” The giant yellow bear waved his hand, and the black pearl immediately levitated into the air. The black pearl was covered with a large amount of runes, and the faint image of a dragon’s shadow could be seen swimming within it. The complicated runes atop it seemed to be exceedingly beautiful, completely different from the crude scrawlings atop ordinary Mortal-rank magic treasures.

“The Netherwyrms Heavenlock Formation has five parts to it. The core is the dragon pearl! And then, there is the dragon’s head, the dragon’s body,

the dragon's claw, and the dragon's tail. Four secondary parts!" The giant yellow bear waved his hand again, and those four scales flew over as well. "They are formed from the scales on the dragon's body, which were forged into four formation disks. One dragon pearl, four formation disks. This forms the complete, five-part Netherwurm Heavenlock Formation. As for the mysteries within, after you bind it and carefully analyze it, you'll understand."

Ning nodded.

He stretched his hand out, accepting the dragon pearl and four formation disks.

"You've already entered the Wargod Hall, Treasure Hall, and Stellar Hall. Only the Divine Abilities Hall remains." The giant yellow bear said. "Work hard to make your breakthrough. At the latest, make your breakthrough at age ten. By then, you can challenge the Divine Abilities Hall."

"Understood." Ning nodded.

"Then now...?" The giant yellow bear looked at Ning.

"I'm heading out." Ning didn't hesitate.

The giant yellow bear nodded slightly. Whoosh! The bear's head dramatically increased and became illusory, swallowing Ning within it. Ning disappeared.

Serpentwing Lake. Beneath a courtyard within Brightheart Lake. There was a lantern hanging nearby, casting a faint light on the surrounding area. It was already late at night.

"Why hasn't the young master returned?" Autumn Leaf held a flask of wine, standing behind Ji Ishwin. Ishwin sat down, and behind him was lying a big white dog, the Godbeast, 'Whitewater Hound'. Autumn Leaf's eyes had a hint of worry within them as well, because Ishwin had been waiting very long already. "The young master said that others were not permitted to disturb him, and that his room was to be completely sealed."

There was nothing Autumn Leaf could do. She knew Ning's temper; if he said he was not to be disturbed, others absolutely would not dare disturb

him.

The only choice was to wait.

“Don’t be impatient. There is enough time.” Ishwin held a cup of wine and spoke softly. He was very calm, because the coming battle would be the most glorious moment of his life.

“Rumble...” The ground vibrated faintly from far away, and instantly, Autumn Leaf revealed a look of delight. “The young master should be leaving his closed quarters.”

And then, a creaaaak.

From afar, a door to a room opened, and a youth clad in beast furs stepped out.

Ishwin stood up, frowning slightly as he looked at Ning. He had watched Ning grow up, and so he could sense any changes Ning went through. He noticed that the current Ning...seemed to be less ‘sharp’ than before, but in possession of a hint of the calmness of the water.

“You were training?” Ishwin asked.

Ning nodded slightly. “I had a breakthrough!”

A look of delight and satisfaction appeared in Ishwin’s eyes. This was his final battle, and he believed that he would die in it! To be able to, before his death, see his son increase in power yet again...naturally, he was incomparably delighted. For his son to be such a monstrous talent...he could already see the sight of his son’s name being spread throughout the vast world.

“Good.” Ishwin just said a single word.

“Uncle White is going as well?” Ning looked towards the nearby Whitewater Hound.

The Whitewater Hound nodded towards Ning.

Ishwin glanced a side at the nearby Whitewater Hound. “Your Uncle White and I are lifelong brothers. I am prepared to die in this battle; even if I survive, I will be left a cripple. Before this, I released your Uncle White

and Uncle Black, giving them their freedom...your Uncle Black has already returned to his mountain forests, but your Uncle White has chosen to accompany me. Even if he dies, he wishes to die by my side. I am unable to force him to leave. I simply cannot. For me, Ishwin, to have a brother like this...even in death, I will feel proud.”

Ning’s heart trembled. He saw the tears brimming in his father’s eyes, and the steely, unrelenting look of eternal companionship in his Uncle White’s eyes.

“Good. Let’s go together.” Ning walked over, embracing the Whitewater Hound, much like he had always done when he was young and would go out to train archery. “Uncle White, let’s go together.” The Whitewater Hound looked back at Ning, and deep love could be seen in his eyes. He had watched Ning grow up from an infant into an adult. This was the only son of his lifelong friend, Ji Ishwin. Naturally, he viewed Ning as a younger family member.

Whoosh.

A boat appeared out of nowhere. Hovering there in midair, it quickly expanded until it reached a size of more than thirty meters. Ning, Ishwin, and the Whitewater Hound boarded it.

“Let’s go.” Ning willed it.

The boat quickly began to fly through the skies, rapidly advancing through the dark night towards the north.

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Back at that desolate mountain forest.

Ji Ninefire, Granny Shadow, the old servant Ah Xing, Ji Truekeep. These four had already arrived, and had already set up a bewildering formation nearby. Ning had spent quite a bit of time meditating in the Stellar Hall. The others had taken care of their matters, then returned. Given the speed a Zifu Disciple could move at, they had naturally already taken care of everything.

“Why did you bring your spirit-beast as well?” Granny Shadow said in a

hoarse voice.

Truekeep stroked the head of a black eagle. "I didn't want it to come, but it insisted. It followed me since it was a chick. All these years, it has never left me. This time, it refused to leave no matter what...forget it. We've known each other all our lives. The relationship between the two of us is closer and more familiar than even the relationship between myself and my wife and children.

Ninefire and the others just looked at him, then nodded gently.

For a spirit-beast to willingly accompany a person in braving danger; this was rare indeed.

"Ishwin hasn't returned yet?" Truekeep stroked the eagle while raising his head to look. The bewildering formation hadn't been activated yet; naturally, his vision was not impacted. Even in the darkness, the faint light of the moon was more than enough to allow Zifu Disciples to see to a great distance with the naked eye.

"Don't be impatient." Ninefire said. "We still have quite a bit of time."

"It'd be best if that kid Ji NIng doesn't come." Granny Shadow sighed, speaking in her hoarse voice. "He insists on coming. He is the true hope of our Ji clan. Given his latent talent and potential, it shouldn't be hard for him to become a Wanxiang Adept, but his temper is too stubborn."

Ninefire laughed, then said consolingly, "Don't worry. He has the Traceless Talisman. When true danger comes, even if he doesn't leave, we will force him to."

"Right. We will force him." Granny Shadow nodded. "If he doesn't leave at the critical moment, I'll commit suicide right in front of him."

"Enough. He knows what is important." Ninefire's eyes lit up. "They are coming."

All of them raised their heads to look.

From afar, in the air, they saw a ray of light fly over. Only when it began to slow as it descended could they see clearly what it was; it was a boat.

This boat swiftly descended from the skies, and then, roughly thirty meters away from the ground, vanished. Ning, Ishwin, and the Whitewater Hound all landed on the ground.

“You brought your Whitewater Hound as well?” Truekeep laughed.

Ishwin glanced over in surprise as well. “Your Snow Eagle came as well?”

The two glanced at each other, then both laughed. They both understood why.

“Alright. We are all here.” Ninefire said. “We should prepare to deal with Snowdragon Mountain.”

“Right.” Everyone’s faces grew a hint more solemn.

Ninefire spoke out. “Earlier, I made a special trip to Swallow Mountain City, to pay a visit to General Dong, who is in charge of the forces stationed here!”

“How did it go?” All of them asked with anticipation.

A hint of fury was in Ninefire’s eyes. “Everyone knows General Dong. He is one of the members of that large, far away clan; the Dong clan! That’s the reason why he was able to become the commanding general of the Darcian Dynasty’s forces here.”

Ning nodded. They knew these things long ago; becoming a general in the Darcian Dynasty’s military...wasn’t something which someone in a small clan like the Ji clan could hope for. After all, that was, without question, a wonderful assignment. Once you put on the ‘tiger garb’ of serving the Darcian Dynasty, who would dare offend you?

“I didn’t want to offend this General Dong.” Ninefire said.

“Unfortunately, when I wanted to make the report, I was told that General Dong was in closed door meditation and unable to receive visitors. I went to see the Deputy General, but I was told the Deputy General had left Swallow Mountain City and wasn’t here at present.”

“What.”

They all grew frantic.



“Definitely a delaying tactic. They didn’t want to meet with us.”

“Snowdragon Mountain must have done something.” Ning was frantic as well. The point of them setting the formation was to delay until the Darcian Dynasty’s Angel arrived. But if there was no report filed...how could the Angel come?

Ninefire said, “I couldn’t be bothered with anything else. This matter involves the fate of our Ji clan. Thus, I no longer cared about whether or not I was offending General Dong. Thus, I began to shout, sending my voice echoing throughout the entire Swallow Mountain City...I said that my Ji clan was willing to offer to the Darcian Dynasty an enormous elemental ore mine! My voice naturally flooded the entire Swallow Mountain City, and everyone within it, along with all of the soldiers, all heard my voice. General Dong thus no longer dared to delay, and so he hurriedly came to see me, his face as black as thunderclouds, and then angrily shooed me away.”

# Chapter 8: A Wonderful Treasure!

“Well-offended.” Ji Ishwin’s eyes flashed with cold light. “This matter involves the survival of the Ji clan. How can we be bothered by whether or not we are offending a garrison general?”

“Right.” Ji Ning, Ji Truekeep, Granny Shadow, and Ah Xing all nodded.

Garrison generals wielded great power. The six hegemons of the Swallow Mountain region all needed to pay a large amount of tax each year to the Darcian Dynasty. They delivered it directly to Swallow Mountain City! Aside from the authority to collect taxes, the garrison general was also responsible for oversight; he was responsible on behalf of the Darcian Dynasty for managing this region.

Power over both oversight and tax collection...if they were really to squabble, these things would cause the Ji clan to suffer in the future.

But that was just suffering; compared to the possible perishment of the entire clan, it didn’t matter!

“As long as we sign an agreement with the Darcian Dynasty, we would have their protection. He, a garrison general, wouldn’t be able to do anything to us.” Ji Ninefire said. “Since everyone is here, I will let you know that I have already chosen the location for our battle with Snowdragon Mountain. Let’s head out.”

“Where will we battle with Snowdragon Mountain?” Ning asked.

“Oxhorn Mountain, located close to the City of Ten Thousand Swords.” Ninefire said.

“Oxhorn Mountain?”

Ning was naturally extremely familiar with the geographical areas around the Ji clan. Upon hearing what Ninefire said, he immediately understood where they would be. Oxhorn Mountain was roughly eight hundred kilometers away from the City of Ten Thousand Swords. It was a large, desolate mountain. Because the peak of the mountain was split in twain, like the horns of an ox, it was referred to as ‘Oxhorn Mountain’.

“I’ve also sent envoys.” Ninefire said. “They are flying on winged beasts towards Snowdragon City to indirectly inform them that our Ji clan has set a grand formation at the base of Oxhorn Mountain. Given the speed at which my envoys travel at, I imagine that in roughly ten hours, they will arrive at Snowdragon Mountain.”

Ning and the others nodded.

Ten hours?

It would probably be tomorrow at noon, then! It made sense. The winged beasts the envoys flew on were ordinary, trained animals; it was only natural that they would not be able to compare with Xiantian-level flying monsters, or to Zifu Disciples.

“I will collect this bewildering formation, and then we will immediately head out.” Ninefire, afraid of being suddenly attacked, had set up the formation here.

“Whoosh!”

An enormous gourd appeared. Ji Ning and the other five, along with the two spirit-beasts, stood or sat atop the gourd. The gourd flew through the skies at high speed.

Oxhorn Mountain was roughly three hundred or so kilometers away. They arrived within moments.

“Right there.” Ninefire pointed at the split peak of Oxhorn Mountain below them. “Land there onto Oxhorn Mountain. We can see everything from there, and given that the surrounding area is completely desolate... there’s nothing that can block our line of sight. As long as those Snowdragon Mountain disciples come, we will immediately see them from far away.”

Ning, Ishwin, and the others all nodded.

Whoosh!

They landed from the skies, then put the gourd away. Ninefire and the others thus landed atop the mountain.

“I have already prepared six formations. They represent my hundreds of years of painstaking research in analyzing formations.” Ninefire pointed at the surrounding area. “I’ll only need as much time as it takes to boil a kettle of tea before I set these formations down. Even if experts from Snowdragon Mountain who specialize in formations come to break through them, they will probably need to spend quite some time to break through six of them. During that period of time, we can also borrow the power of the formation to launch sneak attacks and ambushes, one after another, disrupting them from breaking through the formations! Our goal is to make them waste as much time as possible. Based on my calculations, the Angel of the Darcian Dynasty will arrive in three days. If we can hold for three days, then once the Angel arrives, we will have won!”

“Right. Once the Angel arrives, they will no longer dare to act.” Granny Shadow nodded as well.

“Even if we die, we have to delay them from breaking through our formation.” Truekeep nodded solemnly as well. “Our power, compared to that of a large group of Zifu Disciples of Snowdragon Mountain...if we fight them head on, there’s no way for us to compete. We have to rely on the formations! The more time it takes for them to break through our formations, the greater our chances for victory. Ideally, we should get rid of the formation experts which Snowdragon Mountain has invited over.”

Ninefire shook his head. “They will definitely focus on protecting their formation experts; they might even prepare specifically for us launching our most powerful attacks against them. It isn’t too likely that we will be able to kill the formation experts.”

Ishwin nodded as well. “Let’s do our best to delay!”

Six grand formations!

The disruption of each formation represented an increase in the level of danger the Ji clan would face.

“Patriarch.” Ning said solemnly. “I have a grand formation as well. We can be considered to have seven formations in total.”

“Oh?” They all looked at Ning.

“You have a grand formation?” Ninefire was extremely surprised. “Was it Bei Zishan’s? Bei Zishan came from Snowdragon Mountain, and he should have had some formations available to him.” Although this was what he said, in his heart, Ninefire didn’t feel too hopeful, because as he saw it, Bei Zishan was an amateur, while he, Ninefire, had chosen these six formations based on the most exquisite formations available to him and based on the treasures the Ji clan held.

“No.” Ning shook his head. “I once had a special stroke of fortune, and the most valuable item I acquired from it was this grand formation.”

“A special stroke of fortune?” They were all stunned. Ishwin stared at Ning. Ishwin’s first reaction was to think back to how Ning disappeared in Serpentwing Lake. That time, he and his wife had been worried for many days.

Ishwin said, “Ji Ning has indeed had a special stroke of fortune, which he narrowly survived. However, I didn’t know he had acquired a powerful magic treasure from it.”

Ning nodded. “Patriarch, look.”

Ning waved his hand, and instantly, a black light appeared above them, covered with incomparably intricate, wondrous magical runes. It was the dragon pearl and the four black scales. They caused the surrounding space to fill up with a black fog. Just by looking at them, especially considering the majestic presence of the faint draconic shadow within the dragon pearl, Ninefire and the others felt incomparably delighted.

“Dragon pearl?” Ninefire called out in surprise. “There is a dragon soul within?”

“Look at these runes. In my entire life, I’ve never seen runes as beautiful as the ones atop this treasure.” Granny Shadow was scrutinizing the scales.

“What complicated runes.” Ninefire was stunned as well.

Ning said, “Patriarch, once you bind it, you will understand.”

“How can I bind it? A treasure like this...our Ji clan has existed for

thousands of years without having a treasure like this.” Ninefire shook his head. Although the Ji clan had its important, clan-protecting treasures, those were generally one-use Dao-seals and the like. How could it have an incomparably precious treasure like this, which could be used repeatedly? “This treasure isn’t something which the likes of our clan can use. Normally speaking, we’d be afraid others would come to steal it. However, now that our Ji clan is facing annihilation, I don’t have to be worried, I suppose. Still, Ji Ning, it’s best if you are the one to bind this magic treasure.”

“Patriarch, didn’t you say that once things grew dangerous, I would have to immediately leave?” Ning said helplessly. “If I leave...am I supposed to take the formation with me?”

“Oh...” Ninefire hesitated slightly, then gritted his teeth. “Fine. I will bind it. For now, I’ll use it!”

Given that the annihilation of his clan was at hand, Ninefire wouldn’t hesitate.

However, he could tell, just from the quality of the workmanship, the runes, and the materials used that this magic treasure was extremely precious.

“Whoosh.” Ninefire stretched out his right hand, and a flood of elemental energy flowed into the dragon pearl and the four draconic scales. This treasure didn’t have any remnants of Ki within it, and so it naturally was easily bound.

“A wonderful treasure. A wonderful treasure!” As Ninefire bound it, he immediately began to understand the secrets of the treasure, and his eyes turned completely round. “This is too, too...”

Although he knew that it would be an excellent treasure, Ninefire was still stunned.

“Patriarch?”

“Elder brother?”

Granny Shadow, Ishwin, and the others all looked at the Patriarch.

“What a truly fine treasure!!!” Ninefire stared, round-eyed. He said excitedly, “My Ji clan has hope now. It has hope now! We have a chance! A real chance!”

“What sort of treasure is it? Hurry up and tell us! I’m impatient to hear it!” Granny Shadow said hurriedly.

Ninefire said, with incomparable excitement, “This grand formation has five parts. I can control them all by myself, but I need four Zifu Disciples assisting me! The four Zifu Disciples will be assigned to different locations. One Zifu Disciple will become the core of the ‘Dragonhead Formation’, one will be the core of the ‘Dragonbody Formation’, one will be the core of the ‘Dragontail Formation’, while one will be the core of the ‘Dragonclaw Formation’! Naturally, I will stand guard at the center and control the dragon pearl.”

“When the time comes, for the five Zifu Disciples who set up the formation, the most important thing is that, like with Dao-Soldiers, they will be able to share and borrow each other’s elemental energy! Even if one suffers an attack, it will be spread across to everyone in the entire formation and first be weakened by the formation itself, then dividing up amongst the five users.”

Hearing this, Truekeep, Granny Shadow, and the others were all excited.

Being able to combine their elemental energy and defensive strength was already worth them being excited over; it meant all of them had gained in strength.

“But this is just the first benefit.” Ninefire said excitedly. “There are other intricacies within. I’m unable to fully investigate them right now, but the dragon soul alone...when the time comes, we won’t even have to attack ourselves. We can use the dragon soul to launch attacks. This is much like Dong Xiqi’s Eight Trigrams Blood Dragon Formation. Only, this formation of ours is far more exquisite than that one!”

“Hurry, hurry. I’m going to immediately set it up. I need to focus on it and become familiar with the intricacies within.” Ninefire was incomparably excited.

“Good, good, good.” All of them nodded.

Ning nodded as well. He knew very well that this sort of formation required a very high level of comprehension regarding formations by the user. Only a high level of comprehension could result in effective control of the formation. Ninefire, in terms of talent, might not be superior to Ning, but he had been studying formations for centuries, and so in terms of his ability to control formations, he was on a similar level as Ning.

“Right. Ning, what is the name of this formation?” Ninefire couldn’t help but ask. “I’ve never seen such an intricate, exquisite formation. This formation is more powerful than all six of my other formations.”

“Netherwyrms Heavenlock Formation.” Ning said.

“Netherwyrms Heavenlock Formation.” Ninefire murmured this, then transformed into a ray of light as he began to fly about, setting up the formation. The Netherwyrms Heavenlock Formation had to be set up in advance. The dragon pearl could be carried at all times, but the four dragon scales had to be set down in advance.

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Time passed by the minute and by the second. It was now dark at night. The Ji clan set up their formations, here at Oxhorn Mountain, training in them and becoming more familiar with the Netherwyrms Heavenlock Formation. This caused them all to dance for joy.

“So that’s how it is. How incredible.”

“We can allow the Netherwyrms to attack; the rest of us don’t have to interfere. We can also...transform into the ‘claws’ or the ‘tail’ of the Netherwyrms and actively attack. When we attack personally, the Netherwyrms will be able to unleash even greater power.” Truekeep was incomparably excited. He had never seen such an incredible formation.

“In addition, in the Netherwyrms Heavenlock Formation, the heavens and the earth are ‘locked’, making everything seem illusory! This is the most miraculous bewildering formation I have ever seen. If we want to attack, we can; if we want to retreat, we can hide behind the illusions, making it



so that Snowdragon Mountain wouldn't be able to find us." Ninefire laughed loudly.

Ning was excited as well.

Although this was what he had expected, during their tests, he, a mere early Zifu Disciple, was able to use the combined elemental energy of the entire grand formation...and the Patriarch and the others were peak Zifu Disciples! When accessing all of the elemental energy of the formation, Ning had more elemental energy than any peak Zifu Disciple. For him to use so much Ki in setting up his [Lesser Thousand Swords Formation] meant that the power would be even greater!

"Come, then. Snowdragon Mountain." Ning was filled with confidence.

# Chapter 9: Snowdragon Mountain Assembles

Noon. The Golden Crow [the Sun] hung high in the sky.

While Ji Ninefire, Ji Ning, and the others were setting up and familiarizing themselves with this grand formation, Snowdragon City of the Swallow Mountain area had already summoned quite a few Zifu Disciples of Snowdragon Mountain. In the air above Snowdragon Mountain, there was a giant carpet, upon which was placed a number of chairs, fruit platters, wine, and more.

All of the cultivators were seated in the lotus position, clinking glasses and exchanging toasts. They were quite at ease.

“Junior apprentice-brother Dong Ziqi really has invited quite a few people this time. He invited all of our fellow apprentices in the areas surrounding Swallow Mountain.” A bearded elder held a beastskull cup of wine in his hands, chatting with a silver-haired cultivator who sat next to him. “It’s only been a short while, but more than ten Zifu Disciples have already arrived.”

“The more Zifu Disciples arrive, the better it will be for us when we use the combination techniques off Snowdragon Mountain!” The silver-haired man laughed. “With so many people, no matter how many tricks that puny little Ji clan have, when we join forces against them...we will sweep them effortlessly.”

“How can we possibly need this many Zifu Disciples to deal with a puny little Ji clan?” The long-bearded elder shook his head. He came just for the purpose of earning some merits; after they captured the elemental ore mine, the main sect would undoubtedly reward those who had played a part in it. Participants like them would be awarded merits, based on the size of their contributions. Unfortunately, with so many cultivators present, each person would have slightly less merits to earn.

While they were discussing this...

Dong Ziqi, as the host, was naturally walking around with a glass of wine in hand, chatting with everyone. Amongst his fellow apprentices, he was considered quite famous and formidable, and could be considered an exceptional character. Everyone would give him face. Still, Dong Ziqi spent most of his time with Jadechild.

Jadechild's face was glowing with golden light. Seated there in the lotus position, he had his own unique, domineering aura. The nearby Landwurm shrank to a size of just a few dozen meters and lay there, gorging itself on meat.

Next to Dong Ziqi were three fairly strong fellow disciples.

"Now that senior apprentice-brother Jadechild is here, no matter what tricks the Ji clan uses, it will be useless. Actually, all we have to do is collect some military merits."

"The last time I saw you, senior apprentice-brother, was more than thirty years ago."

All of them chatted, beginning to flatter and praise each other.

After all, this person in front of them, Jadechild, in terms of power, was strong enough to fight head on with an ordinary Wanxiang Adept! By relying on his divine ability, he was able to kill Zifu Disciples as easily as chickens. In addition, they had all heard of how Jadechild had secluded himself in the hopes of making a breakthrough. If he didn't make a breakthrough, that was one thing, but if he did, then he would become a Fiendgod practitioner at the Wanxiang Adept.

By then, Jadechild's status would skyrocket, and he would become a major figure of the main sect. Naturally, they had to befriend him early on.

"Hm?" Dong Ziqi suddenly turned to look into the skies.

From afar, a fur-clad man could be seen, riding on a winged beast. The winged beast was an ordinary one, not a Xiantian-level Greater Monster. The fur-clad man called out, "Cultivators of Snowdragon Mountain, I have come to deliver a message on the orders of my Patriarch. The Patriarch of our Ji clan, as well as the other Zifu Disciples, have set down a grand

formation at Oxhorn Mountain, eight hundred kilometers outside of the City of Ten Thousand Swords. We are waiting for you, Snowdragon Mountain, to break it!”

After speaking, the fur-clad man flew away atop that winged beast.

“Arrogant little fellow. Watch me deal with him.” A Zifu Disciple with triangular pupils immediately said in a cold voice, preparing to act.

“Stay your hand.” A calm voice rang out.

The Zifu Disciple turned to look. The speaker was senior apprentice-brother Jadechild, who was seated in the position of honor. He immediately no longer dared to attack.

“We are all people who have embarked on the path of Immortal practitioners, while he, a messenger, is merely a mortal. If you lower yourself to kill him, wouldn’t you be tarnishing the reputation of our Snowdragon Mountain?” Jadechild said calmly. “Their puny little Ji clan dares to brazenly set up a grand formation and ask us to go break it? Then our Snowdragon Mountain will display our overwhelming power and smash them all to death in an awe-inspiring display.”

“Senior apprentice-brother is correct.”

“Senior apprentice-brother’s words are reasonable.”

“Our power far exceeds the Ji clan’s. For us to act openly and above-the-board is the correct path.” All of the Zifu Disciples hurriedly said a few words of praise.

Jadechild continued, “However, for the Ji clan to directly notify us means that they definitely have some tricks up their sleeves. These clans have been rooted here for thousands of years...they might have some powerful techniques available to them. Fellow apprentices, don’t be careless. Be careful and vigilant...if we are vigilant, then given our power, eradicating the Ji clan will not be an issue at all.”

“Right.” All of them nodded, as though having been lectured. Actually, who amongst them didn’t know this already? Only, since Jadechild was speaking, they had no choice to obediently listen.

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Another four hours or so passed, and another series of Zifu Disciples arrived, three more in total. These three new Zifu Disciples who had rushed here, upon seeing so many fellow apprentices present, and upon seeing senior apprentice-brother Jadechild in particular, naturally also accepted Jadechild as their leader. Although quite a few Zifu Disciples went forward to say a few words to Jadechild, Jadechild just gave a few casual replies.

“Hrm?” Jadechild’s eyes lit up as he looked towards the distant skies. He even put down the beastskull goblet in his hand.

In the distant skies, a white Fairy Crane was descending. There were two Zifu Disciples seated atop it. One was Muse, who had gone out to deliver the invitations to the other apprentices of Snowdragon Mountain; as for the other, this man was dressed in ordinary fur clothes. This practitioner had unbound hair, and his eyes gleamed like the stars. Just looking at him made people unconsciously feel calmer.

“Senior apprentice-brother Zidao has arrived.” Dong Ziqi hurriedly rose.

“Come. Let’s go greet junior apprentice-brother Zidao.” Jadechild rose to his feet.

Jadechild rose to welcome Zidao, naturally causing the surrounding Zifu Disciples to all rise as well. They also behaved in a very warm, welcoming manner.

Nong Zidao...

This was an awe-inspiring figure known throughout the Swallow Mountain region. Jadechild himself was merely a rogue practitioner who eventually joined Snowdragon Mountain! As for Zidao, he had been trained at Snowdragon Mountain as a child, and was a member of the extremely powerful ‘Nong’ lineage of Snowdragon Mountain! Amongst the younger members of Snowdragon Member, he was quite famous for his prowess in formations, and the Ki Refining technique he trained in was an exquisite one as well. In the future, he would have a chance at becoming a Wanxiang Adept.

Logically speaking, it should have been quite hard to invite such a figure to attend.

“I didn’t expect that Dong Ziqi would be able to invite even Nong Zidao to come.” The Zifu Disciples were all quite surprised.

“Junior apprentice-brother Zidao.” Jadechild laughed as he went forward to welcome him. “I thought it would be quite some time, junior apprentice-brother, before you arrived. I didn’t imagine you’d arrive so soon.”

“Senior apprentice-brother Jadechild.” The celestial goose landed on the carpet, and Nong Zidao descended. “After hearing that you were inviting me and giving me a chance of earning some merits, senior apprentice-brother Jadechild, of course I wouldn’t dare be slow. I had Crane leading the way, and so I moved much more quickly than our other fellow apprentices.”

The two of them chatted, paying no attention to anyone else, but the other Zifu Disciples felt that this was only proper.

“Junior apprentice-brother Ziqi.” Nong Zidao looked at the nearby Dong Ziqi. “This time, you’ve accomplished a great deed.”

“With you present, senior apprentice-brother Zidao, I now feel much more confident.” Dong Ziqi said hurriedly. “Prior to this, senior apprentice-brother Jadechild and I were both concerned about those formations...although the Ji clan is a puny little clan, they have a history of thousands of years. For the sake of the survival of their clan, the formations they are setting down will definitely be extraordinary. Before this, I was worried, but with your arrival, senior apprentice-brother Zidao, everything will be simple.”

“With senior apprentice-brother Zidao here, the puny Ji clan’s formations will quickly be broken.”

“Quickly and easily.”

The Zifu Disciples all began to laugh and sigh in praise.

Nong Zidao nodded gently. The main sect actually cared quite deeply

about his expertise in formations, but he was still, after all, a mere Zifu Disciple, not yet a Wanxiang Adept...and thus, his status wasn't able to rise too much. As for Jadechild, however, by relying on his divine ability, he was able to fight with the strength of a Wanxiang Adept. Given that Jadechild wasn't too old, and was capable of making a breakthrough, of course Zidao wanted to make friends with Jadechild. This mission was absolutely a simple one, but with great potential rewards. Of course he had to come.

"Junior apprentice-brother Zidao, with you being here, we have a total of nineteen Zifu Disciples." Jadechild glanced at the surrounding people. "If we include my Landwurm and that Fairy Crane of yours, we actually can be said to have twenty one Zifu Disciples."

They all nodded.

Jadechild then gave another glance at Nong Zidao. Their gazes intersected, and they made the decision simultaneously.

"We have an absolute advantage in power, and for the formation-breaking, we have junior apprentice-brother Zidao." Jadechild said. "Since this is the case, there is no need for us to delay any further. Let us head out for Oxhorn Mountain now! As for the fellow apprentices who will arrive later, junior apprentice-brother Ziqi, you arrange for someone to welcome them, then tell them that we have already gone to Oxhorn Mountain."

"Alright." Dong Ziqi hurriedly responded. Since Jadechild and Zidao had made their decisions, most likely the latecomers wouldn't dare say much.

"Fine, let's go."

"With so many colleagues present, we have enough power to annihilate the Ji clan."

"We even have senior apprentice-brothers Jadechild and Zidao. Everything is set." The Zifu Disciples all spoke out in praise and approval. The more Zifu Disciples came, the more people would divide the merits earned. If they headed out now, and immediately destroyed the Ji clan, then they would earn the majority of the merits, with the latecomers at

most getting a few scraps.

Dong Ziqi directly reached out to his clansmen within Snowdragon City: “Wait here within the city. Once our colleagues arrive, just say...that senior apprentice-brothers Jadechild and Zidao have led the rest of us to Oxhorn Mountain.”

“Yes, Patriarch.” The Xiantian lifeforms within the city began to make their preparations for welcoming the latercomer Zifu Disciples.

“Let’s go.” Dong Ziqi laughed.

Whoosh!

The carpet immediately flew into the distance.

This group of Zifu Disciples remained seated on it, continuing to nurse their drinks. They were quite at ease. To them, this trip to Oxhorn Mountain was nothing more than an excursion tour, incomparably relaxed.

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Oxhorn Mountain.

The sun had already begun to set, having reached the western mountains. The sunlight bathed the world in its glow, causing the desolate wilderness and Oxhorn Mountain to be covered with a layer of red gauze.

The Ji clan’s experts had already finished familiarizing themselves with the formation and were now resting. Their eyes were all filled with confidence and anticipation. If before this, they were prepared to fight to the death, or perhaps even had mentally prepared to die...then they now could be said to have confidence in their ability to give Snowdragon Mountain a fight. Ninefire said, “Unless a few dozen of their Zifu Disciples perish, they can forget about breaking this formation.” His words were filled with an eagerness for the coming battle.

This powerful formation...it would definitely ensure that a large group of Zifu Disciples of Snowdragon Mountain would perish within.

“This bottle of liquefied elemental essence.” Ning was holding the jade



bottle while speaking to his clansmen. “Prior to this, when training, I only used thirty percent. Quite a bit of it remains. In this battle against Snowdragon Mountain, our Ji clan cannot be the slightest bit careless. This bottle of liquefied elemental essence will be of great use. Patriarch, please accept it.”

Just as Ning was speaking, Truekeep suddenly shouted, “Look, look north!”

“Hrm?” All of them turned to look.

Standing at the tip of Oxhorn Mountain, they were able to see that in the distant skies, an enormous carpet was flying over. Atop the carpet was tables and chairs, as well as one Zifu Disciple after another, either seated in the lotus position or reclining while drinking wine, seeming quite relaxed. One of them stood at the very front of the carpet.

From the looks of it, it was Dong Ziqi!

# Chapter 10: Contact

Dong Ziqi stood there atop the carpet, staring into the distance. The distant Oxhorn Mountain looked the same as always, extremely peaceful.

“Apprentice-brothers Jadechild and Zidao.” Dong Ziqi hurriedly called out. “Oxhorn Mountain is up ahead, but at first glance, I don’t see anything.”

Immediately, a group of Zifu Disciples arose, with Jadechild and Zidao leading the way. They stood at the edges of the carpet, staring into the distance. Nong Zidao began to laugh. “Just a vision-bewildering formation. Although you can’t tell from the outside, once you investigate clearly what’s going on, you’ll know.”

Whoosh!

The giant carpet descended, quickly landing on a desolate patch of land not too far from Oxhorn Mountain. This group of Zifu Disciples all walked off, raising their heads as they looked at the distant Oxhorn Mountain.

“Snowdragon Mountain members, our Ji clan has been here waiting for quite some time.” A heroic, forceful voice emanated forth from the distant Oxhorn Mountain.

“So they really are atop the mountain.” Dong Ziqi’s eyes narrowed, and he said, “This is the voice of Patriarch Ninefire of the Ji clan. This old fellow is very crafty, and he is skilled in formations and poisons.”

Jadechild just said calmly, “Nothing more than an old man. Killing him is like killing a chicken.”

“It’s quite impressive for someone to be this bold though.” Nong Zidao laughed as well.

“A grand formation has been set down here at Oxhorn Mountain. There’s no way of knowing what dangers and traps are inside.” A silver-haired Zifu Disciple said, worried. “What are we to do?”

The practitioner with the triangular pupils snorted coldly. “What can we do? To break the formation, we first have to test it and see what intricacies

it holds.”

One Zifu Disciple after another began to discuss what they should do to test it.

“No need.”

Nong Zidao laughed gently. “This bewildering formation is quite ordinary. Just from reviewing the elemental energy ripples surrounding Oxhorn Mountain, I already know the secrets behind the vision-bewildering formation in front of us. Crane, go break this formation.” Nong Zidao, through his spiritual connection, informed the Crane of the secrets of breaking this formation.

The Fairy Crane transformed into a blur, then solidified into a white-robed maiden. The white-robed maiden seemed like an eighteen year old girl, youthful and adorable. “Master, please wait momentarily. I will go break the formation.”

The white-robed maiden immediately transformed into a ray of light, flying away towards the base of Oxhorn Mountain. She didn’t enter the formation at all, instead wielding a long black whip in her hands. Striking out with the whip...it suddenly extended, penetrating into the formation, and then wrapping up the formation flag with incomparable accuracy. And then, with a tug, she pulled it out.

“Good.”

“The spirit-beast of senior apprentice-brother Zidao really is extraordinary.”

“Well broken.” They all congratulated.

From their side, all they saw was a long whip enter the formation, with that part of the whip disappearing. By the time the whip returned, it returned wrapped around a formation flag! With one of the formation flags pulled out...instantly, the bewildering formation was broken, and the entire Oxhorn Mountain seemed to change slightly, revealing several figures at the peak of the mountain.

“The Ji clan.” Muse immediately saw the six of them, with that youth

amongst them. “That genius of the Ji clan, Ji Ning, is here as well.”

“Activate!”

Far away at the peak of Oxhorn Mountain, Ninefire suddenly let out a loud shout, and instantly, a large amount of fog arose, surrounding the entire Oxhorn Mountain. There was black fog everywhere...and for a time, nothing could be seen within.

“Master.” The white-robed maiden flew back like a streak of light. “I just barely missed. As soon as I pulled away one formation flag, yet another formation was set down...there’s no way for me to pull away the other formation flags.”

“It’s enough for you to be able to pull one out. That bewildering formation has already been broken.” Nong Zidao laughed calmly. “It seems this Ji clan has prepared quite a few formations! Unfortunately...it seems as though none of them are particularly high-class formations.”

The nearby Jadechild said, “How can the Ji clan possibly compare with you, junior apprentice-brother Zidao, when it comes to meticulously analyzing formations? If they were capable of setting up a formation that even you, junior apprentice-brother Zidao, felt was high class, then that would be quite baffling. The situation before us is quite normal.”

“How should we break this next formation, junior apprentice-brother Zidao?”

“It’s hard to see anything within this fog formation.”

The Zifu Disciples all looked at Nong Zidao.

Nong Zidao shook his head as well. “The previous vision-bewildering formation was easy to break. The one in front of us, however, is a bit harder. In addition, I imagine that the Ji clan has set up layers of formations, formations within formations! How can we break this fog formation just by looking at it from the outside? Most likely, only someone at the Primordial Daoist level would be able to see through the illusions of this formation at a glance.”

“Then we...?” Jadechild looked at Nong Zidao.

“Investigate the illusions!” Nong Zidao said. “As I see it, our group of nineteen Zifu Disciples should divide into two squads. We’ll first send one group of twelve Zifu Disciples to enter the formation...these twelve fellow apprentices are not to be separated while carrying out their mission, as otherwise, they will be separated and killed. Twelve Zifu Disciples....the Ji clan won’t have the strength to fight back, even if they want to.

Nong Zidao looked at Dong Ziqi. “Junior apprentice-brother Ziqi, this time, it was your Swallow Mountain branch which invited everyone to come here, and so you should lead eleven of our colleagues in entering.”

“Fine.” Dong Ziqi immediately assented.

Nong Zidao immediately began to name names, until finally, twelve Zifu Disciples had been named, with Dong Ziqi being one of them.

“My twelve fellow apprentices, please head out first.” Nong Zidao waved his hand, and three jade talismans flew out towards Dong Ziqi and two others. “These three jade talismans were forged by me personally. As long as you stay close to me, I will be able to sense them. Fellow apprentices, please enter the formation first. Senior apprentice-brother Jadechild and I will follow afterwards...and then, we shall separately test this formation. I will be able to sense everyone’s locations, and so meeting again will be simple.”

“Excellent.”

“Senior apprentice-brother Zidao is meticulous indeed.”

Nobody had any objections.

Because they were all very confident! As disciples of the main sect, they were all skilled in combination attacks! Every six fellow disciples would be able to form one formation. Nine, ten, or twelve disciples were also able to set up formations...if the thousands of powerful Zifu Disciples of the main sect were to join together in one combination formation, they would even be able to give a Primordial Daoist a good fight!

But of course, the prerequisite was that they all had to understand the intricacies of the combination formations. The larger scale a formation,

the greater the level of complexity. For thousands of Zifu Disciples to form into one combination formation would require many moons of training and coordination.

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Oxhorn Mountain.

Black fog billowed everywhere, and Ji Ning and the others flew to the edges of the black fog, staring towards the outside.

Everyone had a heavy feeling.

Just now, that Zifu-level Celestial Crane didn't even enter the formation; all it had done was use a whip from outside, and it was able to effortlessly capture that formation flag. Clearly, it had seen through the illusions of the formation. For it to be able to do so without even entering the formation...this caused every member of the Ji clan to have a heavy feeling in their hearts.

"The bewildering formation I set down outside the perimeter was the weakest one." Ninefire said. "First, we will make the enemies believe us to be weak, so as to make them lower their guard."

"Twelve of their Zifu Disciples have broken off and are moving towards us. It appears they are going to enter." Truekeep suddenly said.

"They are breaking into two groups?" Ninefire nodded slightly. "I expect that the second group is the more powerful one; judging from the conversation they had earlier, it seems as though those two Zifu Disciples are in charge. However, those two are in the second group and haven't entered yet."

"Let us prepare the Netherwurm Heavenlock Formation." Granny Shadow said hurriedly.

Ninefire waved his hand, and two plain, unadorned emblems appeared. The only thing on them was the character for 'Darcian'.

"The official writs?" Ning stared in astonishment at these two emblems. "Two official writs?"

“Previously, when we killed the He siblings, we acquired an official writ. This unbound writ belonged to them.” Ninefire looked at Ning. His eyes filled with hope, he said, “The other official writ belongs to my Ji clan. It is the official writ of the City of Ten Thousand Swords. Ji Ning, for now, we will entrust you with these two writs!”

Ninefire handed them directly to Ning.

“Me?”

Ning was stunned.

“We are facing countless dangers right now. If I am lucky enough to survive, then you can give the official writ for the City of Ten Thousand Swords back to me. If I die, then keep it.” Ninefire said. “No matter what, we absolutely cannot permit Snowdragon Mountain to acquire this official writ. If the situation becomes untenable, immediately use the Traceless Talisman to depart. The official writ will thus go with you as well...and so, even if they break our formation, they will not be able to find the official writ at all. By then, you will represent the Ji clan in signing an agreement with the Darcian Dynasty.”

Ning nodded gently, then accepted the two official writs. When he filled them with his elemental energy, he was able to easily bind them both.

At the same time, he could vaguely sense two places ‘calling’ to him. It was the call of those two cities.

“Excellent.”

Ninefire, Granny Shadow, and the others all laughed. Now that they had already arranged everything, they would be able to battle without any other concerns.

“Truekeep.” Ninefire said. “You shall be the core for the ‘Dragonhead Formation’ of the Netherwurm Heavenlock Formation. I will fill you with the power of the formation.”

“Yes.” Truekeep immediately nodded.

“Ji Shadow.” Ninefire, for once, called out his little sister by her full

name. "You shall be the core of the Dragonbody Formation.

"Alright." Granny Shadow's eyes were filled with anticipation.

"Liu Xing." Ninefire called out the full name of the old servant, Ah Xing, as well. "You shall be the core of the Dragonclaw Formation."

The old servant nodded gently.

"Ji Ning." Ninefire looked towards Ji Ning. "You are the strongest person amongst us. Your elemental energy is somewhat weak, but once you join with the formation...our elemental energy will combine with yours! Your strength will thus rise the most out of all of us! Given this, your power will vastly surpass the power of the rest of us. The Dragontail Formation of the Netherwurm Heavenlock Formation is the most mysterious and most nimble part; it can support everyone else. You will thus serve as the core for this formation, and you will also be our killing blade."

Ning nodded.

Once the Netherwurm Heavenlock formation was set down, of the five formations, the Dragonhead Formation, the Dragonclaw Formation, the Dragonbody Formation, and the Dragon Pearl Formation would not be very nimble. The Dragontail Formation, however, was the nimblest formation, and could easily sweep across to many areas.

"I will stand guard at the core, controlling the formation to support you all." Ninefire looked at the nearby Ishwin. "Ishwin will be my backup. Once I die, Ishwin will replace me."

Everyone knew...that Ishwin would only be able to unleash sufficient energy from his Zifu after using a forbidden technique.

"Everyone!" Ninefire looked at them all. "Everything we do, we do for the Ji clan."

"For the Ji clan." Granny Shadow, the old servant Ah Xing, Truekeep, Ishwin, and Ning all nodded solemnly.

"Go, then. Prepare each of your formations." Ninefire gave the order.

Immediately, Truekeep, Granny Shadow, Ah Xing, and Ning moved at



high speed in four different directions.

.....

At the same time.

Dong Ziqi and the other eleven Zifu Disciples of Snowdragon Mountain were carefully entering the black fog shrouded Oxhorn Mountain. As the person who had invited them here, Dong Ziqi naturally set up his Eight Trigrams Blood Dragon Formation to protect them! The enormous Eight Trigrams Blood Dragon Formation swirled around the eleven Zifu Disciples, providing an outer layer of protection.

This also guaranteed that the twelve Zifu Disciples wouldn't be easily separated from each other.

"A black fog bewildering formation?" The twelve people who entered the black fog region quickly grew cautious."

"Everyone, beware the ambushes of the Ji clan." Dong Ziqi called out.

In the black fog, the aura of the region had become heavy and weighty. All of them grew cautious and guarded, for fear that a sudden, terrifying attack might emerge from the black fog. As Immortal practitioners...they all understood that even if they looked down upon their enemies, in a true life and death battle, they couldn't underestimate any enemy Immortal practitioners.

# Chapter 11: The Netherwurm in the Dark Fog

The thick black fog surrounding Dong Ziqi's group made it so that they couldn't see too far away at all. If the black fog was to disappear, they would discover, to their amazement...that a completely black, enormous dragon that was more than ten kilometers long was currently coiled around the entire Oxhorn Mountain. At the same time, the head of the Netherwurm was staring directly at them.

Unfortunately, they weren't able to see it. This was the reason why Ji Ninefire had set up this black fog bewildering formation.

"Come. Come." Ji Truekeep stared at them from far away. Twelve distant, faint figures could be seen far away in the black fog. These were created through Ninefire's control over the fog; they were used to tell Truekeep and the others where everyone's approximate locations were.

Truekeep himself was within the enormous black draconic head.

After being transformed by the Netherwurm Heavenlock Formation, the elemental energy of the five had given birth to a powerful draconic energy. At the center of the Dragonhead Formation, Truekeep was naturally able to borrow this power, and he could feel his own strength ready to explode.

"Truekeep, wait a bit longer. Don't be impatient." A voice rang out by his ear.

Truekeep nodded.

All the major formations, including the Netherwurm Heavenlock Formation, was controlled by the Patriarch. Only the Patriarch could effortlessly speak mentally to them; the others, including Ji Ning, weren't able to see too far through their eyes. They all needed the Patriarch to assist in guiding them.

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Ninefire was halfway up the mountain, within the body of the enormous

Netherwurm. He could see everything within the grand formation clearly, and the black fog served as his eyes.

“They are all quite cautious.” Ninefire stared at them. “There are twelve Zifu Disciples, and they all belong to the same sect. They definitely have combination formation techniques...if we were to ambush them now, the chances of success probably wouldn’t be that great. In a short while, they will discover that this black fog formation isn’t an exceptionally clever one. And once they slightly lower their guard...the power of the Netherwurm Heavenlock Formation will definitely make them suffer bitterly.”

Ninefire was sufficiently patient. He was able to wait, wait for the best opportunity. Only then would he reveal his teeth and fangs...

Dong Ziqi and the rest of the twelve Zifu Disciples were indeed very vigilant when they entered the formation, all of them staying within the Eight Trigrams Blood Dragon Formation. At the same time, they kept the elemental energy in their bodies activated, prepared to launch a combination attack at any time.

“There’s nothing particularly special about this black fog bewildering formation. I’ve already discovered some of its secrets!” One of them, a black-haired elder, spoke out.

“I found a few hints as well. However, senior apprentice-brother Zha is more formidable than me when it comes to formations. I imagine that in an even shorter period of time, he would be able to defeat this formation.” A silver-haired cultivator said with a laugh. As Immortal practitioners, especially ones at the Zifu Disciple level...given that they were trapped at the Zifu Disciple level, the most fundamental level, and were unable to make a breakthrough, they naturally would spend their time researching other methods.

Formations? Poisons? Golem arts? They would research anything that was useful to them in enhancing their power. Generally speaking, these old fellows who had been alive for three or four centuries would be specialized in several areas.

These branch sect Zifu Disciples who had left the main sect had almost no hope of breaking through. Most of them thus spent some degree of time on formations, and some of them were even more formidable in formations than Ji Ninefire was! Only...although setting one was easy, breaking one was difficult! They naturally weren't confident in their ability to defeat the formations that Ji Ninefire had laid down.

However, there were still some formations which they could defeat; only, it wouldn't be as simple as it was for Nong Zidao.

"I only need as much time as is needed to boil a kettle of tea to break this formation." The black-haired elder smiled.

"Then we'll have to trouble you, senior apprentice-brother Zha."

"We will first break this bewildering formation. There is no need to rely on senior apprentice-brother Zidao to deal with these small formations. We are enough." These Zifu Disciples clearly felt quite relaxed now. When first entering the black fog bewildering formation, the short line of sight made them grow wary, but upon understanding how simple this formation was to break, they clearly were starting to feel more confident.

The black-haired elder nodded. "I will analyze this formation. Everyone, please stay on your guard."

"Leave it to us. Senior apprentice-brother Zha, focus on breaking this formation." Dong Ziqi and the others said.

Moments later.

"Right up ahead." The black-haired elder's eyes lit up. He was completely confident. "I've already seen through this formation."

"Excellent." All of them grew excited.

Dong Ziqi continued to maintain his Eight Trigrams Blood Dragon Formation, and the group of Zifu Disciples advanced at high speed. The fog up ahead seemed to be a bit thinner, and Dong Ziqi's group saw, not too far away, a flag planted into the ground. The flag was grey, and covered with many black diagrams.

“The formation flag!” They revealed looks of delight on their faces.

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“Truekeep, just wait there quietly.” Ninefire sent mentally. “In a short period of time, those Zifu Disciples of Snowdragon Mountain will arrive at your position. When I give the order, kill them.”

“I’ve been waiting for this the entire time.” Truekeep’s eyes were flashing with cold light.

“Excellent. Just listen to my orders.” Ninefire was eager as well.

....

As Dong Ziqi’s group of twelve Zifu Disciples saw the distant flag, they failed to notice that within a hundred meters of them...an enormous draconic head was staring directly at them.

“The formation flag!”

The twelve Zifu Disciples were all wildly overjoyed, and the black-haired elder couldn’t help but reveal a hint of smugness.

Right at that moment...

“Attack!” Truekeep, who had been hiding there for quite some time, finally heard the Patriarch’s voice.

Whoosh!

Just as the group of Zifu Disciples saw the formation flag and were feeling overjoyed, an enormous draconic head suddenly emerged from the nearby dense black fog. The draconic head was incomparably large; in the black fog, they were only able to see several draconic whiskers and scales. The Netherwurm’s head opened its maw, chomping down towards them.

“Careful.” Dong Ziqi, being in control of the Eight Trigrams Blood Dragon Formation, was the first to notice it, and he hurriedly called out in surprise and fright.

It was too late.

It came too fast!

The distance at which one could see within the black fog was simply too short. The Netherwurm was ten kilometers long. How enormous must the head thus be? As the draconic head charged towards them...it moved at a speed that was probably more than ten times faster than that of the Zifu Disciples. The draconic head, with a rumble, blasted into and broke through the Eight Trigrams Blood Dragon Formation. With a crunch, rumble, boom, and terrifying roar...the Netherwurm's head came howling towards the enemies!

In that howling instant...

Truekeep was right in the center of the head. As the Netherwurm's head bit down, Truekeep seemed to have gone berserk as the nine sharp awls hovering around his body were filled by the draconic energy generated by the formation. Those sharp awls moved at an astonishing speed, attacking at three of the Zifu Disciples were were closest to and caught offguard by the Netherwurm's frontal attack.

Supported by the formation, Truekeep's current level of power was even more powerful than that of most peak Zifu Disciples.

Bang! Bang! Bang!

Simply too fast. Two of the Zifu Disciples had giant holes blasted through their chests and their corpses fell into the Netherwurm's devouring mouth. As for the other Zifu Disciple who had been attacked, he kicked backwards, his body flashing like azure light and instantly moving tens of meters away.

A single sudden ambush had killed two Zifu Disciples. The primary reason was that the Netherwurm Heavenlock Formation itself was simply too powerful. In addition, all five of its formations had a Zifu Disciple standing guard at the center, making it so that this Netherwurm seemed to have sentience, making it all the more incomparably, astonishingly powerful.

"While they are ill, go for the kill!" Truekeep then moved towards and attacked two other Zifu Disciples who had somewhat pulled away from their comrades.

“Kill.”

The sharp awls howled!

The black draconic head was like a nightmare.

“Assemble the formation.”

“Assemble the formation.” As the howls rang out, Dong Ziqi and the others had already begun to prepare their formation. These Zifu Disciples were no fools; they knew that they couldn’t move too far away from their comrades. This was because once they moved too far away from each other within this bewildering formation...they would be separately defeated by the Ji clan.

But the problem wasn’t that they moved too far away; it was that the strike of the draconic head had knocked some of them flying!

The power of the Netherwurm’s attack was simply too great!

“Formation, link.”

“Formation, link.”

A white light suddenly sprang up, instantly circulating around the bodies of each of the Zifu Disciples. Soon, eight enormous trigrams made of white light had appeared out of nowhere, with the eight Zifu Disciples separated in each part. Actually, this technique of Snowdragon Mountain’s only required six Zifu Disciples to be completely linked up.

“Where is senior apprentice-brother Zha?”

“Where is senior apprentice-brother Fang?”

Dong Ziqi and the rest of the eight, after setting up the formation, discovered to their amazement that although they had previously numbered twelve Zifu Disciples, only eight now remained. The other four could not be found.

“Senior apprentice-brother Zha.”

They all called out loudly, and their voices echoed within the formation. If the other four were still alive, they would be able to reply verbally.

“Dead. The four of them are all dead.” Dong Ziqi gritted his teeth.

“Too terrifying. Too powerful.” The silver-haired cultivator had a look of disbelief on his face. “Prior to this, I vaguely saw some draconic scales. It was the head of an incomparably large dragon. How could the Ji clan have access to something so powerful? Could that have been a true dragon?”

“There’s no way it could have been a true dragon. If it was a true dragon, we would have discovered it long ago! In addition, how could a true dragon be so enormous? It must be a formation!”

“But how could the dragon produced by a formation be so powerful?”

This group of Zifu Disciples were still in a state of shock. That earlier attack had simply been too powerful. Although they had all been overjoyed upon seeing the flag and had relaxed slightly, they were still within the Eight Trigrams Blood Dragon Formation, after all. In their hearts, they also remained vigilant. Who would have imagined that this sudden ambush would have blasted through them, forcing them all to retreat and knocking some of them flying!

This ambush had killed four of them!

“We can no longer see the formation flag either.” Dong Ziqi swept the surrounding area with his gaze. He was now unable to see the formation flag. “When we were struck by that enormous black dragon, we were all knocked backwards and driven farther away from the formation flag.”

“The illusion isn’t that important. That enormous black dragon is the true disaster.”

“We must have senior apprentice-brothers Jadechild or Nong Zidao come.” The silver-haired expert flipped his hand and retrieved a jade seal. This was the seal Nong Zidao had given him. He clenched it. Crunch! The jade seal disintegrated.

....

On the outside. Jadechild and Nong Zidao, along with the other five Zifu Disciples, were waiting. They were in no rush to enter the formation.



“What sort of techniques could this sort of small clan have?” Jadechild laughed. “Our twelve Zifu Disciples of Snowdragon Mountain have entered, and they have access to a combination formation technique...that is more than enough to utterly sweep and dominate the enemies.”

“Right. The formations of a small clan like this can’t possibly be very powerful. Our fellow apprentices also have studied formations. They, too, are capable of breaking formations.” Nong Zidao felt relaxed as well. As he saw it, the combined power of those twelve fellow apprentices....should indeed be more than enough to easily dominate this sort of small clan.

Suddenly...

Nong Zidao’s face changed.

“What happened?” Jadechild immediately asked.

“The jade talisman I gave him.” Nong Zidao said in a soft voice. “One of them was just crushed. It seems they encountered some sort of danger. Otherwise, they wouldn’t ask us to save them.”

“This puny little Ji clan was able to force them to beg us to save them?” Jadechild couldn’t believe it. Prior to this, Nong Zidao had given them a jade talisman...primarily because this was a habit of the disciples of the sect. None of them actually thought it would be used.

“Come, let’s enter the formation.” Nong Zidao said.

The other five nearby Zifu Disciples had heard their conversation. They, too, were surprised. The twelve comrades who had entered had actually been forced to shatter a jade talisman? Still, upon seeing Jadechild and Nong Zidao by their side, they felt completely confident.

“You wait here. If any comrades of our Snowdragon Mountain comes here, tell them that we have already entered the formation.” Nong Zidao waved his hand, then produced a wooden golem. The wooden golem had a green light within its eyes, and it just listened, then nodded obediently.

“Yes, master.”

“Let’s go.” Nong Zidao said.

Immediately, Jadechild, under Nong Zidao's guidance, led the group of seven Zifu Disciples and two Zifu-level spirit-beasts into the black fog that surrounded Oxhorn Mountain.

# Chapter 12: The Secret Killer Weapon – Ji Ning

The enormous scales atop the draconic tail were all incomparably clear. Ji Ning sat within the draconic tail, surrounded by those enormous scales.

“Hrm?” Ning suddenly heard the sound of explosions and angered shouts.

“Assemble the formation!” “Formation, linked!” Cries of surprise and terror rang out from afar. Ning’s ears twitched, and he laughed. “IT has begun.”

Per their original strategy, Ning was in the strongest position of all, out of the various experts of the Ji clan! He would only be unleashed at the critical moment...there was no need for him to engage yet.

Moments later.

“Whoosh!”

A figure flew over. It was Ji Ishwin, dressed in a white fur robe.

“Father.” Ning rose.

“Take it!” Ishwin produced six flying swords out of nowhere, which hovered there above his palm. “These were acquired by your Uncle Truekep after executing four Zifu Disciples. One of them was a Zifu Disciple who controlled multiple flying swords; we acquired five from him alone. Thus, the four of them had a total of six flying swords.”

Ning didn’t hesitate, immediately accepting them.

“Perfect timing.” Ning was incomparably excited. Prior to this, everyone had already traded for some magic treasures. Some of them were useless to him, but were very important to others! At such a crucial, life-and-death juncture, nobody would be shy; everyone acted quite forthrightly. For example, Ning gave the venomous bugs he had acquired from Bei Zishan to Ji Ninefire, while Ninefire, upon learning that Ning desperately needed ranked flying swords, had managed to scrape together five of them.

Bei Zishan had left behind two; combined with those five, Ning had seven. That wasn't even enough for a single formation base of the [Lesser Thousand Swords Formation]! But now that he had six more...he had enough.

"These six flying swords are all ranked magic treasures." Ishwin said.

"Right." Ning nodded. "With these six ranked flying swords, my power is going to rise significantly. Later, I'll have to have a nice little 'battle' against these Zifu Disciples of Snowdragon Mountain!"

Ishwin had a rare look of delight on his face as well. "This has truly been wonderful. And it is all thanks to the Netherwurm Heavenlock Formation you brought out! In a single ambush, we killed four enemy Zifu Disciples. Without the aid of this formation, we would probably lose someone on every attack."

"Right." Ning nodded.

The Netherwurm Heavenlock Formation had been acquired by Ning from the Aquatic Estate. Naturally, it was quite powerful.

"Make your preparations. Once you are needed, the Patriarch will immediately notify you mentally." Ishwin instructed, then transformed into a ray of light and left.

Ning immediately filled his elemental energy into the flying swords, seizing every moment of time and hurriedly binding them. Although it was true that, as the spirit of the Aquatic Estate had said, it would be best if the flying swords which served as the core of the [Lesser Thousand Swords Formation] all came from the same source, the current Ning, unfortunately, had no right to be choosy. It was already quite good for him to even be able to have enough ranked flying swords.

.....

The black fog hung everywhere.

Nong Zidao, Jadechild, and the others were advancing carefully through the black fog. The Fairy Crane and the Landwurm were all in human form now, accompanying Nong Zidao and Jadechild.

“This black fog bewildering formation isn’t even worth discussing.” Nong Zidao finally spoke. “I’ve already completely seen through its mysteries. I can sense the direction in which Dong Ziqi’s group lies as well. Now, act according to my instructions...and we will soon reunite with them.”

“We will listen to you, senior apprentice-brother Zidao.”

“Senior apprentice-brother Zidao is as formidable as ever.” The other Zifu Disciples previously had ugly looks on their faces, but now they finally looked pleased.

Prior to this, upon entering the formation, they had immediately shouted, and the distant voices of Dong Ziqi and the rest of the eight Zifu Disciples had naturally responded to them...and through the discussion, Jadechild and Nong Zidao learned that four of their comrades had actually died! This caused Jadechild and Nong Zidao to become incomparably enraged and cautious.

Nong Zidao said in a clear voice, “Junior apprentice-brother Ziqi, we are coming over right now. We will soon arrive.”

“Boom!”

“Kill!”

“Kill that old bastard of the Ji clan!”

A series of angry roars rang out from afar, causing Jadechild and Nong Zidao to be startled. But then, the warcries and sounds of battle came to a halt.

Jadechild shouted with a frown. “Dong Ziqi, are you alright?”

“We are fine.” The voice came from far away. “The eight of us stayed in formation the entire time, not relaxing at all. Just now, an enormous draconic claw attacked us...it was even more powerful than the first attack. We were at a slight disadvantage, but by joining forces, the eight of us were able to defend well enough that none of us perished.”

“Alright. We will immediately come over.” Jadechild said.

“Let’s hurry over.” Jadechild looked towards Nong Zidao by his side. “Prior to this, it was the dragon’s head. This time, it was the dragon’s claw. This puny little Ji clan actually has access to such a technique...”

Nong Zidao said solemnly, “Most likely, in the past few thousand years, the Ji clan must have acquired this formation through a stroke of great fortune. It seems to be quite powerful. Let’s quickly reunite with them.”

Right at this moment...

Whoosh!

The surrounding black fog suddenly grew denser, and a bone-piercing, insidious cold seemed to fill it.

“Go forward. Stop. Turn left...stop.” Nong Zidao guided them easily, but then his face suddenly changed. “Eh?”

“What is it?” They all looked towards him, awaiting his directions.

“It changed.”

Nong Zidao had an ugly look on his face. “There are multiple layers of formations, formations within formations. I’ve become baffled by an even more powerful formation.”

“Can it be that even you can’t break it?” Jadechild looked at him.

“It will be very difficult.” Nong Zidao looked at the surrounding area. Waving his hand lightly, he could sense that insidious, bone-piercing chill within the fog.

“How long will you need to break it?” Jadechild asked.

“I don’t know!” Nong Zidao shook his head. “If I’m fast, an hour. If it takes a long time, one or two days.”

The faces of the surrounding Zifu Disciples all changed. Jadechild said, shocked, “That long?”

.....

Ning sat in the lotus position within the enormous tail of the Netherwyrm. Around him, more than seven hundred sword-type magic

treasures were floating about, nine of which were particularly dazzling to behold. The white light covering those nine was much stronger. The hazy white light continuously thrummed through the swords, quickly coalescing into a sword light in front of Ning.

“Right. With these nine ranked flying swords as a formation base, they can now serve as the core for the other seven hundred-plus flying swords of my [Lesser Thousand Swords Formation]. The power clearly has grown dramatically.” Ning revealed a look of delight. “Only, the ranked flying swords put a lot of pressure on my soul as well.”

Unranked flying swords made up the majority of the [Lesser Thousand Swords Formation].

The difference between using them and using ranked flying swords in the [Lesser Thousand Swords Formation]...was quite significant and apparent. The difficulty in controlling them rose dramatically, but so too did the power!

“I’ve only added nine ranked flying swords. After gaining insight into my Sword Domain, my soul has grown much stronger. I’m still able to use the ninth level of the [Lesser Thousand Swords Formation].” Ning had the feeling that if he were to add a few dozen ranked flying swords or a few hundred ranked flying swords...the total number of swords he was able to control would drop sharply!

“Ji Ning!” A powerful voice echoed forth.

“Patriarch.” A look of delight appeared on Ning’s face.

“We are in trouble now.” Ninefire’s voice rang out.

“What sort of trouble?” Ning was worried as well.

“The second group of Zifu Disciples of Snowdragon Dragon have just entered the formation. Amongst them there is one person in particular, Nong Zidao, who even I have heard of! Nong Zidao is extremely skilled in formations. He is able to easily defeat the black fog bewildering formation, and so I was forced to use the Netherworm Heavenlock Formation to trap and bewilder him.” Ninefire transmitted.

Ning's face changed.

The Netherwurm Heavenlock Formation...it had the secondary effect of being a bewildering formation. It was far more exquisite than the Ji clan's own bewildering formations.

"They also have someone known as Jadechild. I haven't heard of him, but his power is extremely great." Ninefire sent mentally. "In our Ji clan, your power is the greatest, while the second strongest is our old servant, Ah Xing. Just now, when Ah Xing ambushed Dong Ziqi's group of eight, Dong Ziqi's group was able to maintain their formation, and Ah Xing wasn't able to do anything to them. However, I've discovered that Jadechild and Nong Zidao haven't joined together in a formation. I ordered Ah Xing to attack as I thought we had an opportunity...but who would have imagined that despite riding on the claws of the Netherwurm, Ah Xing was blocked off by Jadechild alone!"

"Blocked by him alone?" Ning was shocked.

"He is extremely powerful. Ah Xing launched a sneak attack, then immediately retreated." Ninefire said. "Right now, there are a total of two groups in the formation. The second group is clearly far more powerful than the first one. Thus, we need to immediately eradicate the first group; otherwise, if they combine, we won't be able to do anything against them."

Ning nodded.

"You are the most powerful person in our group. Immediately go out and attack Dong Ziqi's group. I will direct you. Prepare to listen to my commands." Ninefire said.

At the same time, the black fog in front of Ning began to part, revealing a corridor.

"Wonderful. I've grown impatient long ago!" Ning sprang to his feet, then shot forward at high speed through the corridor.

.....

Dong Ziqi and the rest of the eight advanced carefully, always maintaining their formation. That white glow surrounded the eight



trigrams which covered them.

“Fellow apprentices, be careful. This is the Netherwyrms Heavenlock Formation!” Nong Zidao’s frantic voice rang out from far away.

“Netherwyrms Heavenlock Formation?” Dong Ziqi and the others looked at each other, all of them seeming puzzled.

The distant Nong Zidao said in a loud, frantic voice, “We just suffered an attack from a draconic claw as well. Your senior apprentice-brother, Jadechild, forced it to retreat. I could immediately recognize this as being the Netherwyrms Heavenlock Formation. This Netherwyrms Heavenlock Formation is an ancient, powerful formation! There is a complicated version of the Netherwyrms Heavenlock Formation, and a simplified version of it...according to legend, the Marquis of Stillwater has access to a Heaven-rank Netherwyrms Heavenlock Formation. This formation which the Ji clan is using must be a simplified Mortal-rank formation. But even a Mortal-rank formation...is astonishingly powerful. We are in true danger this time. We have to conserve our power; otherwise, we will be in danger of dying.”

“Your senior apprentice-brothers, Jadechild and myself, will focus on breaking the formation. We won’t be able to divide our attention and take care of you for now. Take care of yourselves, the eight of you.” Nong Zidao’s voice echoed.

Dong Ziqi and the rest of the eight looked at each other, their faces unsightly.

For this formation to force Nong Zidao and Jadechild to completely focus their efforts on breaking it...one could imagine how terrifying it was.

“I’ve never even heard of this ‘Netherwyrms Heavenlock Formation’. Only someone like senior apprentice-brother Nong Zidao, who has studied many formation manuals in the main sect, would know of it. How could the Ji clan have acquired such a powerful formation?”

“Netherwyrms Heavenlock Formation?”

The look on Dong Ziqi’s face was very ugly.

“We will do our best.” Dong Ziqi looked at his seven comrades. “This is a life-and-death battle. Either the Ji clan dies or we die! Everyone, if you have any life-protecting measures, use them. Don’t save them.”

Their attitudes had all changed.

At first, all of them were simply toying around. The sudden deaths of four comrades had shocked them, but they trusted that once Jadechild and Nong Zidao joined them...all the danger would dissipate like smoke, like the clouds. But now, Nong Zidao had said that this game had just turned deadly.

“If I knew that I’d risk my life, I wouldn’t have entered Swallow Mountain.” They all felt misery in their hearts, but with death staring at them, all of them prepared to fight to the death.

Three hundred meters or so away from them.

An enormous draconic tail was coiling there. Ning was in the center of the draconic tail, and the seven hundred flying swords were all hovering around him, prepared to begin the slaughter.

“Ji Ning, attack!” Patriarch Ninefire’s voice rang out within his mind.

“Kill!”

A fierce light flashed through Ji Ning’s eyes.

Swoosh!

Instantly, the entire, enormous Netherwurm whipped its tail out, and its tail struck forward towards those eight nervous, guarded Zifu Disciples.

# Chapter 13: Terrified By the Slaughter

The black fog swirled about like mist. The eight Zifu Disciples of Snowdragon Mountain were constantly staying in their formation and moving about within it.

“This Netherwurm Heavenlock Formation...even senior apprentice-brother Zidao is unable to break it. What else can we do? Let’s just run around wildly. Senior apprentice-brother Jadechild and Zidao are within this formation as well. Perhaps we might run into them.” The eight Zifu Disciples clung to this hope as they advanced.

They all clenched their various Dao-seals in their hands, prepared to do battle at any moment.

Suddenly...

Rustle...

A gentle sprinkling of rain suddenly began to fall. The rain fell like fine, silken threads that were incomparably soft. Dong Ziqi and the rest of the eight, upon suddenly encountering the rain, were greatly shocked.

“Rumble...” A layer of white light appeared on their bodies, which directly blocked those ordinary drops of rain.

“It’s simply rain. Don’t make a fuss over nothing.” The hawk-nosed cultivator said coldly.

“Why is there rainwater within this formation?” Dong Ziqi frowned.

“Perhaps it is currently raining outside. This bewildering formation only has the power to bewilder; it isn’t able to block out the rainwater from the outside world.” A silver-haired cultivator spoke out.

Dong Ziqi and the others all nodded.

They were cultivators. They could clearly sense that this rain was falling naturally; it wasn’t poisonous liquid generated by the formation! For the moment, they didn’t think of the possibility of it being a Dao Domain; generally speaking, someone who had reached the Dao Domain realm could, with a thought, convert the surrounding area into their own

Domain. Different Daos would naturally result in different Domains.

Some could, with a thought, transform the surrounding area into boundless flames. Others could transform the surrounding area into a field of lightning. As for Ning, what he generated was the descent of rainfall.

“Let’s be careful nonetheless. Don’t let this rainwater soak us.” A gray-robed elder said.

“Junior apprentice-brother An’s words are reasonable. We are trapped in the Netherworm Heavenlock Formation; we should be careful.”

These Zifu Disciples would rather do too much than to be careless.

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Whoosh!

An enormous black draconic tail swept towards them as fast as lightning. In the midst of the draconic tail, there was a fur-clad Ji Ning, who stood there silently. The area around him was filled with more than seven hundred flying swords, nine of which were ranked. The nine ranked flying swords served as the nucleus, and the converted energy of the [Lesser Thousand Swords Formation] was incomparably shocking.

The Rainwater Sword Domain had already been set up!

An elemental energy that was greater than any peak Zifu Disciple’s, activated through the ninth level of the [Lesser Thousand Swords Formation]...although only nine of these seven hundred-plus flying swords were ranked, this was still the ninth level of the [Lesser Thousand Swords Formation]! Sometimes, quantity was a form of quality!

“Die.” Ning’s eyes flashed with a killing light.

Swish!

The sword light in front of him suddenly pierced through the skies, instantly transforming into a line of rainwater. At this moment, Ning was using all his might. The ninth level of the [Lesser Thousand Swords Formation], supported by the formation and the Rainwater Sword

Domain...all of these things made it so that the power of this sword of Ning's was at an incredibly high level.

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"Let's keep moving." Dong Ziqi and the others were continuing to advance while blocking off the descending rain. Just as they were walking forward calmly...

Suddenly...

"Eh?" The face of the hawk-nosed black-robed cultivator changed. In that instant, he vaguely felt a tremendous danger descending. This was something that he gained only after becoming an Immortal practitioner; he could sense when a dire threat was descending. Unfortunately, this danger sense always came quite late; it would only appear when the threat had already drawn very close. Despite that, it had still saved his life a few times.

"Fogswirl Umbrella!" An umbrella suddenly appeared around the hawk-nosed black-robed cultivator. The umbrella spread open, completely protecting the hawk-nosed man's body.

A seemingly ordinary line of rainwater gently swirled and flew over, lashing out towards the triangle-pupiled cultivator.

The triangle-pupiled cultivator was staring in astonishment at his comrade, who had suddenly used his protective magic treasure. A sense of danger suddenly descended.

"Not good." As a line of rain drew close to him, the triangle-pupiled cultivator suddenly felt a sharp ripple come towards him. He hurriedly waved the longsword in his hand, wanting to block, but it was too late...

That line of rainwater had come too close!

And his sword techniques were too ordinary. How marvelous were Ning's sword techniques? With a gentle twist, the rainwater moved past the longsword, then scraped past his head!

"Rumble..." The formerly hazy white light of the Eight Trigrams

Formation suddenly grew blindingly bright.

“We are under attack!” Dong Ziqi and the others were all shocked. After suffering an attack, the formation would naturally explode with power.

Bang!

The head of the triangle-pupiled cultivator, his eyes still filled with shock, went flying into the air.

One of the eight Zifu Disciples had died!

“What?!” Dong Ziqi and the others were all terrified and shocked. One of their comrades had been killed while they had been maintaining the formation. How sharp did the enemy’s attack have to be?!

“Assemble the formation!”

“Assemble the formation.”

The remaining Zifu Disciples called out in terror. With one of the eight dead, the earlier formation had already disappeared. For one of them to have been killed after setting up the formation...if they didn’t set it up again, wouldn’t they all be dead for sure?

“Bang!” That line of rainwater, after killing the triangle-pupiled cultivator, had used up most of its power, but the other seven cultivators currently weren’t being protected by the grand formation. Naturally, the line of rainwater flew forward agilely. It swirled past...cutting apart the protection of a set of magic armor, sending yet another head flying, this one of the silver-haired cultivator. Only then did the line of rainwater vanish.

“Rumble...” The white light appeared once more as the six surviving Zifu Disciples reformed the formation.

“Rumble...”

The enormous draconic tail came sweeping over again.

“Kill.”

“Kill him.”

“Kill.”

The six Zifu Disciples, upon seeing the draconic tail, seemed utterly enraged and berserk. Green vines, bolts of lightning, blasts of flame, phoenixes...they threw everything forward towards the draconic tail that was sweeping towards them.

“They really have gone berserk.” Ning was shocked.

“I’m going.” The black wings behind Ning trembled, then sent him flying in a solitary arc, far into the distance. Only the lightning bolt and the fiery phoenix were able to strike him. The strikes from the lightning bolt and the fiery phoenix allowed Dong Ziqi and the others to see Ning’s true appearance...Dong Ziqi was shocked and amazed. He immediately recognized that this was the genius of the Ji clan, ‘Ji Ning’.

Rumble...the powerful attacks sent even Ning hurtling backwards, disappearing into the distant black fog.

Dong Ziqi and the rest of the six Zifu Disciples felt dread in their heart.

“Quick.”

“Assemble the formation.”

“Let’s go all out.”

An enormous Eight Trigrams Blood Dragon Formation suddenly appeared around Dong Ziqi, and the eight blood dragons began to swim about.

That hawk-nosed cultivator, standing outside the formation, hurriedly threw out three flags. The formation flags fluttered, then quickly formed into an enormous hazy aura of light. This white aura of light seemed like a pyramid that enclosed the six.

“Grow.”

Many vines suddenly emerged, wildly sprouting about in the surrounding areas. These vines criss-crossed each other, completely filling the surrounding area.

“Children, go.” A dense cluster of venomous pests began to fly about in

the surrounding area, filling the skies and blocking out the sun, completely filling the nearby region.

“Come.”

The gray-robed elder produced an enormous banner that fluttered with a bloody light. One enormous after another phantom flew out from the banner; some were four-legged beasts, while others were flying creatures. Nine enormous phantoms emerged into the surrounding area.

These six Zifu Disciples were all sweating. They brought out all of their best techniques, completely and tightly sealing off the surrounding area...

They looked at each other, their eyes filled with amazement and dread.

“We won’t be able to leave. We have to wait here.”

“We can’t keep walking.”

“We’ll guard here.”

These techniques of theirs were virtually all used for defending a particular location. The long, growing vines, the grand formation, and the other techniques weren’t able to be maintained while moving!

“Who is that person? Who attacked us just now? By his appearance, he should be young.” The gray-robed elder clutched at his bloody banner as he looked at Dong Ziqi.

“Right. Who was that? How could he be so powerful? Before this, we suffered the attacks from the dragon’s claw and the dragon’s head...this should have been the dragon’s tail. Why is it so powerful?” The hawk-nosed cultivator looked at Dong Ziqi as well. The other cultivators also stared at him.

These people felt hatred.

This was supposed to be an easy, relaxed journey. Who would have imagined that they had actually bitten down on such a terrifying, tough bone? First of all, they had even never heard of this ‘Netherwurm Heavenlock Formation’; only Nong Zidao had. The Netherwurm Heavenlock Formation was one thing; after all, the power of a formation



depended on its users. They felt no fear towards those other two who had relied on the power of the formation to attack them. But that young, slender youth that had just appeared was truly terrifying. Even while maintaining their formation, he had still killed two of them...

Nong Ziqi said hurriedly, "The Ji clan has in total six fairly powerful figures. They are Ji Ninefire, Granny Shadow, an old servant, Ji Ishwin, Ji Truekeep, and Ji Ning! Ji Ning is the genius of the Ji clan...when he was eleven or twelve years old, he killed junior apprentice-brother Bei Zishan."

"He killed Bei Zishan when he was twelve?" These people all revealed looks of amazement.

"This year, he should be sixteen." Nong Zidao said. "Just now, the person who launched that attack was Ji Ning! However, prior to this, Ji Ning and I exchanged blows; he wasn't able to do anything to my Eight Trigrams Blood Dragon Formation. His strength is only slightly superior to Ji Ninefire and the others, which is why I didn't hold him in any regard. I didn't imagine that with the support of the Netherwurm Heavenlock Formation, his strength would reach such a terrifying level."

"If he is only one level higher than Ji Ninefire in strength, how could he explode with such power?"

"A monster who was able to kill junior apprentice-brother Bei Zishan at the age of eleven or twelve...how can we use common reasoning to explain him? Most likely, this Ji Ning made some sort of a breakthrough." The gray-robed said in a hoarse voice. "This sort of monster...he was able to kill two of our comrades, even when we were in formation. Now, all we can do is stay here and wait."

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Ning was knocked flying backwards a great distance, and he smashed into a region of loose rocks and grass.

"Good heavens." Ning crawled painfully to his feet. The wounds on his body rapidly healed, leaving behind not even a scar.

"Those Zifu Disciples seemed to have gone berserk. They applied all of

those extremely powerful Dao-seals and threw them at me! That fiery phoenix in particular...it even chased after me, and it was also very powerful. It blew a large hole into my chest. I wonder what sort of a Dao-seal that was?" Ning cracked a smile, feeling very confident. "Still, I killed two of them. For me to be able to kill two out of eight of them...only six are left! I'll keep killing."

"Ji Ning!" A voice suddenly rang out.

"Patriarch." Ning was startled.

"Well done, my good fellow! Ji Ning, hahaha, you truly are formidable. You killed two of them at one go. Now only six are remaining. However, don't be too impatient. Wait for me to finish talking, then attack." Ninefire sent hurriedly. "Dong Ziqi and the others are terrified by the way you killed them, and so they have set up layers of techniques and are staying on guard. Let me describe these techniques to you. After listening, you can make your decision."

# Chapter 14: Crushed

Ji Ninefire sent, “We are already familiar with Dong Ziqi and Muse, out of those six. Those two have already set up the Eight Trigrams Blood Dragon Formation and those growing green vines! The hawk-nosed cultivator used a formation to protect the surrounding area! The black-clothed female cultivator released a large amount of venomous bugs. The gray-robed cultivator is holding a large banner which has released a large amount of monster wraiths.”

“Eight Trigrams Blood Dragon Formation? Green vines? Formation? Venomous pests? Banner? That’s only five; the sixth cultivator?” Ji Ning asked softly.

“The sixth cultivator hasn’t done anything for now.” Ninefire sent. “I’ve told you everything now. You should consider how you will attack. Remember, don’t let yourself fall into any danger.”

“Don’t worry, Patriarch.” Ning laughed.

And then, Ning began to ponder.

Prior to this, although he killed two Zifu Disciples in his surprise attack, he hadn’t acquired any magic treasures, because as soon as he had charged over, he had been blasted backwards. The items of those two Zifu Disciples were still in the hands of Dong Ziqi’s group.

“Five types of techniques?”

“Hmph!” Ning’s eyes had a cold light flash through them. “No matter how they struggle, they will die!”

Suddenly...

“Senior apprentice-brother Jadechild, senior apprentice-brother Zidao.” A voice suddenly called out. “We just suffered the attack from the dragon’s tail of the Netherworm Heavenlock Formation! The genius of the Ji clan, Ji Ning, is in command of the dragon’s tail. The power of it is tremendous. He killed two of our fellow apprentices! All we can do for now is stay on guard. Senior apprentice-brothers Jadechild and Zidao, remember, beware

the rain...beware the rain!"

"The six of you need to be careful as well. Delay as long as you can." A voice rang out from the other side.

Hearing the distant shouts, Ning frowned slightly. "I have to eliminate those six as soon as possible."

Nong Zidao was very formidable!

He was even able to recognize at one glance that this was the Netherwurm Heavenlock Formation. Although Ning was very confident in the Netherwurm Heavenlock Formation, he still worried that if they were permitted to slowly analyze it, they might truly be able to break through the Netherwurm Heavenlock Formation! If the Netherwurm Heavenlock Formation was destroyed, then the Ji clan's members would, one by one, have their formations broken, and Snowdragon Mountain would easily annihilate the Ji clan's side.

"Kill." Ning, riding on that enormous draconic tail, once more charged towards those six.

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Venomous pests were flying around the outer perimeter.

A hazy pyramid of light stood on guard, and atop it was coiled a large number of green vines.

The pyramid of light had eight blood dragons swimming about within it. It also had various enormous phantasmal birds and beasts moving about, each one of them filled with murderous auras.

"If we just defend, no matter how powerful they are, they will find it hard to break through." The black-clothed female cultivator said in her cold voice.

"Right." Dong Ziqi nodded.

These defensive measures were different in nature; they each compensated for the weaknesses of the others. They could be described as an impenetrable wall.

“Even though he is a Fiendgod Body Refiner, and even though his swordplay might be formidable, he can forget about entering.” The gray-robed elder clutched that large banner and spoke in an icy voice.

Rustle...

Thin, sparse droplets of rain began to fall. The rain was as fine as silk, gentle and breezing. Drizzling rain and fog...these two were beautiful things, but the rain that fell in the midst of this black fog made the faces of Dong Ziqi, Muse, the gray-robed elder, the black-robed woman, the hawk-nosed man, and the skinny man change. They grew nervous.

“He’s coming.”

“The rain came.” Dong Ziqi’s group of six held their breaths.

Prior to this, when the rainwater fell, two of their comrades were silently ambushed and slaughtered.

“Chopchopchopchop...” The large number of venomous pests that had been swirling around the outside were suddenly chopped apart by the rainwater, one after another. The silk-like rain...every single strand of rain was as sharp as a knife. Countless lines of rain flew about, wildly chopping apart these pests. Rainwater was everywhere. Although there were many venomous pests, because they were outside the perimeter, many of them were instantly slaughtered.

Every single line of rain contained a hint of the power of the Dao!

Fire-Water Lotus; this technique was developed based on control over natural fire and water, which Ning gained through his comprehension of the Dao.

These lines of rain were also formed from natural water. Given Ning’s comprehension of the Dao, their killing power approached that of the Fire-Water Lotus now! To use them to break through the formation and kill these Zifu Disciples wasn’t practical, but to kill the venomous pests was simplicity itself. The venomous pests swarmed about in dense clusters; naturally, each of them were individually weak. When Ning had battled against Bei Zishan in the past, he was able to effortlessly crush and

kill many venomous pests with his Fire-Water Lotus. Ning's insights into the Dao were now far greater than they had been in the past.

"Rustle..." The rain continued to fall.

"Chirpchirpchirp..." The flourishing swarm of venomous pests let out agonized cries, but then they were annihilated. The outer perimeter, which had been guarded by those dense clusters of venomous pests, had now become very clear. All of the venomous pests had been annihilated.

The black-robed female cultivator's face was ashen. She said frantically, "Why didn't you let my bugs return?" Prior to this, when her bugs suffered the initial attacks, she had immediately wanted to control her bugs to make them fly back and hide within the pyramid of white light.

"The pyramid formation has been set up. How can we possibly disperse it for the sake of your venomous pests?" The hawk-nosed cultivator shouted. "The rainwater has already descended. Ji Ning can appear at any moment! How can I disperse the pyramid? And even if I did disperse it, only a small portion of your venomous bugs would be saved. Since that was the case, it was best not to disperse it."

The black-robed female gritted her teeth in rage.

"Junior apprentice-sister Lu, don't be angry. It is true that the pyramid cannot be dispersed."

"The power of this rain is too formidable. Every single line of rain actually has the power to attack."

"Can it be that this is some sort of rainwater technique? Generally speaking, water-based techniques are used for defense. This sort of rain which descends from the heavens...rain which is completely formed from nature...how can it be used in a technique?!" They were stunned at the power of the rainwater. Those venomous pests were able to bite through a Zifu Disciple's protective armor, after all. Although they were individually weak, to kill them wasn't that easy either.

"Can it be a Dao Domain?" The gray-robed elder suddenly said slowly.

"Dao Domain?"

“Rainwater Domain?”

The other cultivators all called out in shock.

“How can that be possible? Impossible. Ji Ning is only sixteen! He’s merely a Zifu Disciple. How can he have developed a Dao Domain? Many Wanxiang Adepts are unable to do this.”

“Impossible!”

These Zifu Disciples didn’t dare believe it.

Right at this moment...

The black fog in the distance began to grow sparse. An enormous draconic tail slowly began to move, and right in the middle of it was a fur-clad youth. The fur-clad youth was surrounded by more than seven hundred flying swords. Smiling slightly, he walked forward, step by step, towards them.

“Ji Ning.”

“It is Ji Ning.” Dong Ziqi and the rest of the six stared at the fur-clad youth. At the same time, they felt astonished that Ji Ning dared come walk over openly.

Dong Ziqi shouted, “Ji Ning, ambushing us is one thing, but you come openly...you are seeking death.”

Ning slowly strolled forward. Suddenly, beneath his feet, a lotus flower appeared. A beautiful, enormous Fire-Water Lotus suddenly bloomed, making Ning appear to be the seed within the lotus...the Fire-Water Lotus petals swiveled around him, and around the petals were the seven hundred-plus flying swords. Beyond even them was the enormous shadow of a draconic tail. And beyond the tail...was the boundless rainwater.

In this moment, Ning seemed to have become the center of the universe.

Even Dong Ziqi and the others felt as though their souls had been stirred.

“Junior apprentice-brother Muse, stop him.” Dong Ziqi shouted.

“Leave it to me.” Muse’s normally cold face was filled with a murderous aura. Instantly, many of the thick, sturdy vines began to wildly coil about and fly towards Ning. These vines weren’t the vines that Ning had encountered when he had fought against Muse the first time. Those vines had been suddenly grown, but the vines that Muse was now using against him had been growing for quite some time; they had already reached an astonishing degree of toughness.

Ning continued to smile.

“Rustle...” The enormous Fire-Water Lotus swiveled about him. After gaining insight into the Dao Domain level, the power of Ning’s Fire-Water Lotus had risen yet again.

Swish! Swish! Swish! Swish! Swish! Swish! Countless lines of rain seemed to chop down like countless blades, wildly chopping at the vines. Countless thin vines were shattered and minced into peaces, leaving behind only the thick main vines, which had many wounds atop them. But upon touching the Fire-Water Lotus, they were instantly ground apart.

“Rustle...”

One lotus flower after another bloomed, with Ning at the center. The lotus flowers continuously bloomed freely, and even the leaves of the lotus flowers continuously expanded.

The swiveling, crushing power continued unabated.

Those vines weren’t able to draw close to Ning at all.

“Break.” Ning looked at the white pyramid of light, then spoke in a soft voice.

Roar...

A faint draconic roar rang out. The enormous draconic tail suddenly swept forward, smashing viciously against the white pyramid of light. The draconic scales on the draconic tail were all clearly visible, and the power of the tail was astonishing. With an exploding sound, it smashed against the white pyramid of light, crushing it and shattering it. As soon as it did, the rainwater instantly fell down upon and uprooted the three formation



flags.

Ning had already effortlessly broken through the third layer of the five layers of defenses they had set up.

“Go. Devour his soul.” The gray-robed elder waved the banner in his hands. This banner wasn’t like Bei Zishan’s, which had been created through refining countless mortal souls into dread wraiths. He used the souls of powerful monstrous beasts, and so comparatively speaking, the amount of sin he had accumulated was much smaller. The power of this banner, although inferior to a dread Myriad Wraiths Banner, was still much more powerful than Bei Zishan’s half-complete banner.

These monster wraiths emitted soundless shrieks as they charged towards Ning, completely ignoring the rainwater and the blocking Fire-Water Lotus flowers, instantly invading Ning’s body.

Ning continued to smile.

Within his consciousness, an image of Lady Nuwa emitted boundless light. When the light touched those monster wraiths, smiling looks of relief appeared on the faces of the formerly incomparably savage wraiths. They all bowed towards Ning and towards the divine image of Lady Nuwa, expressing their gratitude, and then disappeared, returning to the cycle of reincarnation.

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“What?!” The gray-robed elder watched as the colors of his banner began to grow dim and dull. His face instantly changed. “The monster wraiths were all killed?”

The others, including Dong Ziqi, had been eagerly looking at the gray-robed elder. Hearing this, though, their hearts turned cold.

Ning strolled forward.

The Fire-Water Lotus continued to swivel...the rainwater continued to fall...

“You can die now.” In front of Ning, a sword light suddenly formed.

When it flew out, it merged into the rainwater and vanished. And then, yet another sword light appeared. Ning was releasing one blast of sword light after another, without stopping.

Bang!

How powerful was Ning's sword light now? A single sword light was enough to pierce through the eight blood dragons and annihilate them all. As for the others, such as the gray-robed elder and the hawk-nosed man, they all began to howl savagely. They saw that their death had come. They all took out their Dao-seals or unleashed their magic treasures, preparing to go all out.

“Bang...” “Boom...”

The rainwater that swirled around them seemed like an crushing wall of copper or a rampart of steel. The Fire-Water Loti continued to expand in layers as it attacked them.

Ning had used everything available to him, and he completely crushed these six Zifu Disciples.

“Bang!” Accompanying a miserable, unwilling screech, Muse's head was the first to go flying. Ning had, at one go, unleashed nine blasts of the [Lesser Thousand Swords Formation] sword light, transforming them all into rainwater and merging them into the boundless rain of the surrounding region. He began to easily kill them, one by one.

# Chapter 15: Spare No One

“Junior apprentice-brother Muse!” Dong Ziqi and the others, upon seeing Muse’s head go flying, all turned cold. Prior to this, two of their group of eight Zifu Disciples had been killed despite being in formation by Ji Ning. And now, their six-man formation...Ning had shattered their layered protections, and for him to kill them now was indeed quite easy.

“Kill.”

“Go all out against him.”

The hawk-nosed man, the gray-robed elder, the black-robed female cultivator...they all seemed to have gone mad. It wasn’t that they didn’t want to flee; trapped within the grand formation of the Ji clan, where could they flee to? Only by staying here did they have a chance to live.

“If you struggle, you’ll just die tired.” Ning walked forward, and the formerly savage, wildly coiling thick vines seemed to rapidly transform into nothingness.

Swish! Swish! Swish! Swish! Swish! Swish!

The rain dropped down like lines of silk. Within the rain, there were strands of [Lesser Thousand Swords Formation] sword light that had transformed into incomparably sharp ‘rain’.

“Ahhh!” Although her body had been protected by that golden light, the black-robed woman’s eyes suddenly widened as a sword light chopped straight through her neck, sending her beautiful head flying.

Yet another one had died!

“Go die.” The Dao-seal in the hands of the gray-robed elder suddenly transformed into an enormous fiery phoenix which once more spread its wings and flew towards Ning. But a curtain of water formed from the rainwater around Ning blocked the advance of the fiery phoenix. Bang!!! An violent explosion blasted apart the watery curtain, and even Ning’s Fire-Water Lotus trembled.

Ning himself, however, continued to walk forward.

“Die.” Ning stared at the gray-robed elder, whose face changed. He swung the banner in his hands backwards, because yet another strand of rain was striking towards him.

Slash!

A different strand of rain whipped past the gray-robed elder’s forehead, piercing straight through his head. His eyes were filled with a look of terror, shock, and rage...and then, he collapsed.

“I simultaneously attacked you with two strands of sword light. Did you think you wouldn’t die?” With a thought, Ning then controlled the strands of sword light to strike towards the others.

“Junior apprentice-sister Lu, senior apprentice-brother An, junior apprentice-brother Muse.”

“Junior apprentice-sister Lu!”

The remaining three, the hawk-nosed disciple, Dong Ziqi, and the skinny man, all had ashen looks on their faces. The six of them had lost three of their number in a flash! The power of those rain lines formed from sword light was simply too great, especially with the support of the formation and the Sword Domain. These were attacks of the Wanxiang Adept level. For them to face these attacks by themselves was impossible.

“Ji Ning! You will definitely die!” Dong Ziqi had gone berserk. He stared at Ji Ning. “You killed the disciples of Snowdragon Mountain. Snowdragon Mountain will not let things end here!”

“You will definitely die.”

“Snowdragon Mountain has many more disciples. We will definitely eradicate your Ji clan.”

The three of them had all gone berserk.

Slash!

Slash!

The hawk-nosed man and Dong Ziqi were simultaneously sliced at by three lines of rain formed from sword light. If they had only been struck

by a single flash of sword light, they would have been able to resist, but three lines of rain formed from sword light swirled about them. How could they resist? Their foreheads were pierced through, and their eyes became filled with terror, anger, and disbelief.

“I, Dong Ziqi, am the number one expert of Swallow Mountain. I, I actually died in the hands of Ji Ning. I’m unwilling to accept this. I’m unwilling to accept this!!!”

“Detestable, detestable! If I had known, I wouldn’t have come here.”

The two of them had both been heroic figures of their eras. Actually, if it hadn’t been for the support of the Netherwyrms’ Heavenlock Formation, given that Ning only had early-stage Zifu-level energy, either of the two would have been able to battle with Ning for quite a long period of time.

But with the support of the great formation, they died in a single exchange.

“Snick.” The remaining person, the skinny man, had his neck severed as well, but then flesh grew out of his neck as it instantly healed.

“A Fiendgod Body Refiner?” Ning lifted an eyebrow.

“Ji Ning, can you spare my life?” The skinny man took a step back and looked at Ning. Although he was a middle-stage Fiendgod Body Refiner, he no longer felt any confidence. The difference in power between them was too great...with the support of the formation and the Rainwater Sword Domain, Ning absolutely had the power of a Wanxiang Adept. He could crush him!”

Ning laughed softly. “Given how far this has gone, you tell me. Will I spare you?”

Bang!

The black wings on Ning’s back trembled, and he suddenly shot towards the skinny man.

“Ji Ning!” The skinny man howled with rage as he gripped a long black staff in his hands. “Ji Ning, our Snowdragon Mountain will definitely

annihilate your Ji clan and kill you!”

Slash!

Slash!

Three flashes of sword light slashed across his body. Although the skinny man’s body was durable, he was still quadsected by the sword flashes of the [Lesser Thousand Swords Formation]. As for Ning, who charged towards him...the Fire-Water Lotus swiveled around him, grinding down that skinny man, making it so that the man’s corpse was instantly ground into mincemeat. Although the mincemeat struggled to solidify into a whole, they were only able to resist the Fire-Water Lotus for a few breaths before completely dissipating.

The surrounding area was now completely silent.

The rain still fell in a drizzle, and the Fire-Water Lotus continued to slowly swivel back and forth. Ning, standing in the middle of the lotus, swept the surrounding area with his gaze. Dong Ziqi and the others lay fallen on the ground, none of them breathing, all of them dead.

“Dead.” Ning said softly. “This group of Zifu Disciples has been completely exterminated. Only the other group of Zifu Disciples remain.”

Two badges of Zifu Disciples from Snowdragon Mountain had entered the formation.

The first batch of twelve Zifu Disciples had been completely annihilated!

It wasn’t that they were weak; it was that Ning was too powerful!

Although, for the Ji clan, even though they had the help of the Netherwyrms Heavenlock Formation, for them to kill these twelve was still quite hard. Prior to this, when Ji Truekeep and the old servant Ah Xing had tested their attacks, they found that aside from being able to kill those four people in the first ambush, they were no longer able to achieve much success after Dong Ziqi’s group of eight had set down their formation.

As for Ji Ning, he was able to use the Netherwyrms Heavenlock Formation to make up for his own weakness in elemental energy. He also

had the [Lesser Thousand Swords Formation] and his Rainwater Sword Domain, which allowed his power to reach the Wanxiang Adept level. And this was what had allowed him to crush them and slaughter them all...

Halfway up the mountain.

Ji Ninefire, in control of the Netherwurm Heavenlock Formation, revealed a look of shock and amazement on his face. He was so excited, his entire body was trembling.

“Patriarch?” The nearby Ji Ishwin looked at Ninefire.

“Victory. Ji Ning won.” Ninefire was incomparably agitated. “Dong Ziqi’s group has been completely killed by Ji Ning. The first group of twelve Zifu Disciples of Snowdragon Mountain has been completely annihilated. None are left.”

Ishwin, hearing this, felt his heart tremble as well. “The first group is completely dead?”

“Right.” Ninefire nodded repeatedly.

They were both excited as well as in a state of disbelief...they were merely the Ji clan, after all, just a clan of the Swallow Mountain region! What they faced was an enormous organization Snowdragon Mountain. The enemy’s group of Zifu Disciples who had hastened over here would have utterly terrified any ordinary clan. Even Ninefire had only wanted to delay until an Angel of the Darcian Dynasty arrived.

They hadn’t thought that they would actually be able to kill twelve Zifu Disciples in a row, without a single member of the Ji clan dying!

“Now, only one remains.” Ninefire said. “Jadechild and Nong Zidao’s group of Zifu Disciples.”

“Once we kill them, our victory is assured.” Ishwin said hurriedly. “Nong Zidao in particular. If we kill Nong Zidao...I refuse to believe that Snowdragon Mountain would be able to find a second expert in formations in a short period of time.”

“The second group holds Jadechild, Nong Zidao, and others. As long as

Nong Zidao dies, our Ji clan will have won for certain.” Ninefire nodded as well.

Snowdragon Mountain might have other Zifu Disciples who would hasten over...

But experts in formations were rare. Nong Zidao had only come to give face to Jadechild. In the region nearby Swallow Mountain, aside from Nong Zidao, Snowdragon Mountain had no other experts who were particularly skilled in formations.

.....

Within the Netherwyrms Heavenlock Formation. An abyssal aura wafted about.

Nong Zidao was frowning as he was analyzing the Netherwyrms Heavenlock Formation. He seemed to have completely absorbed himself in calculating the positions of the Netherwyrms Heavenlock Formation.

The other Zifu Disciples all stared around them, on high alert.

Jadechild stood by Nong Zidao’s side, with the aura of a general who would block anything and everything which came.

Suddenly...

“Ji Ning!”

“It is Ji Ning!”

“Junior apprentice-brother Muse, stop him!” A series of shouts rang out from afar.

“Go all out against him!”

“Junior apprentice-sister Lu, senior apprentice-brother An, junior apprentice-brother Muse!” Fierce, grief-stricken shouts rang out from afar.

“Ji Ning, you will definitely die!”

“Ji Ning, our Snowdragon Mountain will definitely annihilate your Ji clan and kill you!” A berserk, desolate curse rang out.

And then, utter silence.



There was no longer any sound that could be heard.

Nong Zidao had already opened his eyes, and a look of utter solemnity was in Jadechild's gaze. The other nearby Zifu Disciples all had extremely ugly looks on their faces.

"Junior apprentice-brother Dong." Jadechild called out in a loud voice which echoed within the formation.

No voice replied.

Not a single voice!

"Dead." Nong Zidao said hoarsely. "All dead."

"We, we...senior apprentice-brother Zidao. Senior apprentice-brother Jadechild..." The red-haired cultivator stuttered. The other cultivators all looked towards Jadechild and Nong Zidao. Prior to this, there had been twelve Zifu Disciples in that group, but all of them had been killed. How could they not worry? How could they not feel uneasy?"

Jadechild growled, "Obey my orders. Junior apprentice-brother Zidao, continue analyzing the formation. Fairy Crane, Landwyrm, continue to protect junior apprentice-brother Zidao. Myself and the rest of the six, we will set up the formation and protect junior apprentice-brother Zidao."

"Yes."

Instantly, the formation lit up.

"All you need to worry about is defense." Jadechild's eyes were glowing with a golden light as he swept the surrounding area with his gaze. "If that Ji Ning truly does come, let me handle him."

"We'll entrust everything to you, senior apprentice-brother Jadechild." Nong Zidao said. At the same time, he set up eight formation flags within an area of ten meters. A black tower of light instantly sprang up, layering protections around him. The only people within the black tower of light was Nong Zidao, the Landwyrm, and the Fairy Crane.

"Don't worry." Jadechild's eyes were calm, but his baleful aura surged to the heavens.

As someone who had become a peak Zifu-level Fiendgod Body Refiner long ago, and one who trained in a divine ability and thus was able to fight at the Wanxiang Adept level, how could he fear Ji Ning?

.....

The Golden Crow hung high in the sky.

Within the governor's mansion, inside an enormous city.

One of the two elders of the Dong clan, Dong Fanyu, was seated there. Next to him there was a youth, who laughed and said, "Senior Dong, please wait momentarily. The Patriarch will arrive shortly."

"No rush, no rush." Dong Fanyu laughed as well.

Four members of Snowdragon Mountain's Swallow Mountain branch had gone out to invite people; the two elders of the Dong clan, Muse, and Ju Nianxiong. Of the four, Muse had gone to invite Jadechild and Nong Zidao, which he felt was enough, and so he had returned earlier. Based on their original plans, each of them needed to invite roughly ten or so Zifu Disciples.

The two elders of the Dong clan and Ju Nianxiong had invited many, but some of the Zifu Disciples they wished to invite had already gone to Snowdragon Mountain. Thus, they continued to go out and invite more; only after each of them had successfully invited ten over would it be enough. They had no idea as to what was happening in Swallow Mountain.

"Senior apprentice-brother Fanyu." A deep voice rang out. A silver-robed, middle-aged man walked out. "Last time I saw you, senior apprentice-brother, you were back at Swallow Mountain. In the blink of an eye, more than a hundred years have gone by. Earlier, senior apprentice-brother, you told my subordinates that there is something important you wish to discuss with me. What is it?"

"A wonderful affair!" Dong Fanyu's face was all smiles.

# Chapter 16: Wanxiang Adept

“A wonderful affair?” The silver-robed man had a puzzled look on his face.

Dong Fanyu said, his face all smiles, “I’m not going to hide this from you, junior apprentice-brother Wu. This time, we’ve come to deliver you a chance to render some major merits. At my Swallow Mountain region, we’ve just discovered an enormous elemental ore mine. This elemental ore mine has a circumference of four thousand or so kilometers...” Dong Fanyu spent quite a period of time praising the elemental ore mine.

“Elemental ore mine?” A clear, cold voice rang out, and a young man dressed in a long, beautiful black robe emerged from a side door of the hall. This young man had long, narrow eyes and a tall nose. He looked like a viper, and his gaze alone made Dong Fanyu tremble.

Dong Fanyu hurriedly rose to his feet, then asked in a low voice, “Junior apprentice-brother Wu, this is...?”

The silver-haired man had already risen to his feet early on, bowing towards the young man with incomparable respect. “Master!”

“Master?” Dong Fanyu was very shocked.

“This is my master, Adept Xu.” The silver-robed man said.

Dong Fanyu, upon hearing his junior apprentice-brother Wu address this person as ‘master’, immediately knew who this young man was. Immortal practitioners...couldn’t be judged from their outward appearances. The more powerful a person was, the more often they tended to look young. If you were to run into a young Immortal practitioner who looked like a child, one would have to be very careful!

Dong Fanyu was a disciple of Snowdragon Mountain, after all; he knew that his junior apprentice-brother Wu was a student of a core disciple of the main sect, ‘Xu Li’.

They were both students of the main sect, but the difference in their status was very different.

Snowdragon Mountain would divide up students based on their innate talent and potential. Some people who had the potential to break through to become Wanxiang Adepts or even had the chance to become Primal Daoists. Naturally, they would be heavily invested in. Xu Li was a core disciple, and had in fact reached the Wanxiang level more than sixty years ago.

“Dong Fanyu pays his respects to Adept Xu.” Dong Fanyu immediately bowed and saluted.

“You were speaking of an elemental ore mine?” Adept Xu said calmly. “Your Swallow Mountain branch actually discovered an elemental ore mine...so why have you come to invite my disciple?”

Dong Fanyu said hurriedly, “I don’t dare to hide anything from you, Adept...” He described what had happened in detail.

Adept Xu nodded lightly, a hint of a smile at the corner of his lips. “So that’s how it is. I didn’t expect that on this leisure trip of mine, I would encounter this sort of wonderful affair. Wu Qi, accompany your master on a trip to Swallow Mountain and take over the elemental ore mine.”

Dong Fanyu said, delighted and surprised, “Adept, if you go, then this matter will be settled!”

But although he was delighted on the outside, he was cursing inwardly. Discovering the elemental ore mine was a great accomplishment, but if the Swallow Mountain branch was actually able to take it over, that would be an even greater one! But for a Wanxiang Adept to now intervene... Wanxiang Adepts were extremely important members of Snowdragon Mountain. After all, the highest ranking Primal Daoists rarely involved themselves in worldly matters.

Thus, for Adept Xu to intervene and take over the elemental ore mine meant that when the main Snowdragon Mountain sect divided up accomplishments, the percentage that Adept Xu would receive would be very high.

For a Wanxiang Adept to intervene...it meant that every single Zifu Disciple would lose a majority of their potential rewards!

“How could a puny Ji clan necessitate a Wanxiang Adept to intervene.” Dong Fanyu felt misery in his heart, but on the surface, he looked incomparably excited. He didn’t dare say a single word of complaint.

Adept Xu gave this old fellow surnamed Dong a sidelong glance. He couldn’t care less about him. “Come. Let’s go to Swallow Mountain.”

Whooooosh.

A sailboat suddenly appeared beneath his feet. Adept Xu, Wu Qi, and Dong Fanyu all boarded the ship. Wu Qi then sent a message to the Zifu Disciples of his own clan: “I’m making a trip to Swallow Mountain. I will return in a few days.”

Swoosh. A white sail fluttered atop the sailboat, and then it transformed into a streak of light, piercing through the skies at an astonishing speed.

“So fast.” Dong Fanyu was in a state of shock. This was the first time he had flown on a flying magic treasure controlled by a Wanxiang Adept.

“We’ll only need two hours to reach Swallow Mountain.” Adept Xu said calmly.

Swish!

The sailboat left behind just a speck of light in the horizon, then completely disappeared. As for Dong Fanyu...he didn’t go invite any other Zifu Disciples. After all, since a Wanxiang Adept was taking part, why bother go asking any Zifu Disciples to come?

.....

Within an ancient city. Within a hall that was in a rather remote location. There were five jade strips glittering with azure light. The jade strips were all the size of a palm and very slender, seemingly quite exquisite.

There were two servants seated within the hall. They were chatting amongst each other, bored.

“Bang!” “Bang!” Two of the jade strips suddenly shattered, one after the other.

The two servants were both startled.

“What was that? Was that a mouse?”

“How odd.”

They looked around with mystified looks on their faces. And then, one of them saw that two of the jade strips in front of them had completely shattered. He was so terrified that his face changed. “Life...life...” The other servant, seeing the look on his face, couldn’t help but mumble, “Why are you so scared? This is the governor’s estate. How could there be any dange-...life...life...” He, too, stared in terror at the shattered jade strips.

“The life tablets!”

“The life tablets are shattered!” The two servants stared at each other, their eyes filled with shock and terror.

“Quick, quick, report this.”

The two of them charged out wildly.

This was a major event!

Just moments later!

“Whoosh!” A ray of light surged into the skies, and standing above the ray of light was an old man with triangular pupils. His eyes were filled with savagery as well. “Two Zifu Disciples died? What exactly is going on in Swallow Mountain?!”

.....

“The life tablets, the life tablets are shattered!”

.....

“Life tablets!”

.....

In the instant that Ji Ning killed those eight Zifu Disciples, in the commandery cities around the Swallow Mountain area, one clan after another discovered that life tablets of their Zifu Disciples had just shattered. If the life tablet was shattered, that meant the Zifu Disciple was

definitely dead! Naturally, these clans were shocked and enraged.

Some of the other Zifu Disciples even began to fly at high speed towards Swallow Mountain.

.....

Within Swallow Mountain. Oxhorn Mountain, located eight hundred kilometers outside of the City of Ten Thousand Swords. The entire area was covered with black fog.

Ji Ning stood there, and around him was a group of Zifu Disciple corpses, including Dong Ziqi's.

"Hrm?" Ning frowned. He could sense a savage, fierce aura constantly pouring into the Darknorth Swords in his hands. Earlier, he had relied on the [Lesser Thousand Swords Formation] to kill, but to be safe, Ning had also kept the Darknorth Swords in his hands. However, that ferocious aura coming from the corpses actually was drawn into the Darknorth Swords.

"The Darknorth Swords are weapons that have undergone the Fiendgod Bloodforging rites! They are able to absorb baleful auras, murderous auras, necromantic auras...but you have to personally kill someone." Ning understood this. The boundless earth was filled with baleful auras in many places; for example, when Bei Zishan had tortured countless people to death, that place became filled with a tremendous amount of baleful auras and murderous auras. But because those countless people hadn't been killed by Ning, Ning hadn't been able to absorb those baleful auras.

But Ning had personally killed all eight of these Zifu Disciples.

The Darknorth Swords were able to actively draw from them.

"How strange. Why is it that they can only absorb the baleful auras created by those I personally killed, and not other baleful auras?" Ning shook his head inwardly. He thought back to the Fiendgod Rites of Bloodforging, and to that ancient, powerful aura which descended that was unfathomably more exalted than even the 'Dao'. "It makes sense. If it can grow just by absorbing any type of baleful aura, then it would be far too easy for Bloodforged weapons to grow in power."

“Eh? In my body...?” Ning lowered his head.

Surges of savage auras were constantly entering his body; or, to be more precise, Ning’s Zifu within his body was drawing it all in.

Within the Zifu, that region which was filled with violet energy in the shape of a lake. That lake was formed from elemental energy, and above that lake of elemental energy there were various magical treasures, such as a flying boat, flying swords, and other items that temporarily didn’t need to be used. Amongst them was one of the Darknorth Swords, which hovered there...

Given that he was holding two of the Darknorth Swords in his hands, there was one of them that was still stored within his body.

Before establishing the Zifu, there was no way for a person to store magic treasures within the body! But upon doing so, ranked magic treasures and the Bloodforged weapons could be stored into his body. As for those unranked magic treasures, there was no way they could be drawn in.

“Crackle...”

The three Darknorth Swords. Two were outside, one was within his Zifu.

They shared the baleful auras, wildly devouring them. As they did so, on the surface of the Darknorth Swords there appeared a common character, from the Fiendgod language...‘Kill’. The Darknorth Swords themselves were evolving; after they had undergone the Rites of Bloodforging, this was the densest collection of baleful auras which the Darknorth Swords had ever devoured.

After all, the baleful aura generated from killing a Zifu Disciple was far denser than the aura generated from killing ten thousand ordinary mortals.

“All done.” Moments later, the three Darknorth Swords all emerged to hover in front of Ning.

The glow of the Darknorth Swords seemed to be even deeper.



He used his divine will to control those three Darknorth Swords to slice through the air. Swishswishswish...

Ning even stretched out his palm to allow the Darknorth Swords to slice against it. Three wounds appeared, then rapidly closed.

“They did indeed grow much sharper.” Ning revealed a look of surprise and delight. “It seems that to nurture these powerful Bloodforged weapons, there really is a need for much slaughter.” Ning, by nature, disliked wanton killing, but if someone was to violate and offend him and give his Ji clan no chance for survival, Ning wouldn’t show a hint of pity.

“Patriarch.” Ning said. “How should I attack the other group of Zifu Disciples?”

“Ji Ning.” Patriarch Ninefire sent back. “The other group has a total of seven Zifu Disciples and two Zifu spirit-beasts. The most powerful of them are Nong Zidao and Jadechild. Nong Zidao is a formations expert; he isn’t frightening in open battle. The other Zifu Disciples, even combined, are unable to do anything to you. The biggest problem for you will be that Jadechild.”

“Jadechild?” Ning nodded lightly.

“Jadechild should be an Fiendgod Body Refiner. I am always watching him. From their conversations, I can tell...that they are very confident in Jadechild. They know that twelve Zifu Disciples have died, yet still have full trust in Jadechild! I also heard those Zifu Disciples mention the phrase ‘divine ability’. If my guess is correct, Jadechild should be a peak Zifu Disciple who has learned a divine ability.” Ninefire sent. “A peak Zifu Ki Refiner who has a divine ability...his power will absolutely be at the Wanxiang Adept level. You must be careful.”

Ning nodded.

Wanxiang Adept level?

By relying on an elemental energy that was more powerful than the peak Zifu level, the Rainwater Sword Domain, and the [Lesser Thousand Swords Formation]...Ning, too, could be said to have the combat ability of a

Wanxiang Adept!

The enemy was a Fiendgod Body Refiner and had a divine ability?

“If you can’t kill Jadechild, do your best to kill Nong Zidao.” Ninefire sent. “Nong Zidao is their one and only formations expert. As long as Nong Zidao dies, there is no way they will be able to defeat our Netherwurm Heavenlock Formation. We will still be able to hold on until the Darcian Dynasty’s Angel arrives.”

“Fine.” Ning nodded. “I understand.”

Whoosh!

Ning waved his hand, and a large number of storage-type magic treasures, flying swords, wings, banners, and other magic treasures appeared. These were all magic treasures that had been left behind by these eight Zifu Disciples.

“I’ll first retrieve all the ranked flying swords these people carry. After I bind all of them, perhaps my [Lesser Thousand Swords Formation] will gain further in power. And then, at full strength, I will go battle that Jadechild.” Ning’s eyes were filled with a killing intent.

# Chapter 17: Ji Ning Battles Jadechild (Part 1)

A sailboat was sailing through the endless horizons of the sky.

Adept Xu Li, Dong Fanyu, and Wu Qi were seated in the sailboat. Dong Fanyu suddenly pointed in surprise towards the distance. "That's junior apprentice-brother Lu." From afar, a ray of light was advancing at high speed, but clearly it was far slower than them.

"He seems to be headed towards Swallow Mountain as well?" Wu Qi was surprised.

"Apprentice-nephew Lu?" Adept Xu Li revealed a rare smile on his face. Instantly, that flying sailboat drew closer to the ray of light. A few breaths later, it had moved next to it.

The ray of light had a middle-aged man standing atop it.

The middle-aged man had a hint of urgency in his eyes. Upon seeing the sailboat block his way, he was forced to slow down. But upon seeing Adept Xu Li standing atop the sailboat, he immediately bowed with respect. "Lu Huang greets uncle-master Xu. I didn't imagine I'd run into you here, Uncle-Master."

Upon seeing Dong Fanyu by Adept Xu's side, Lu Huang's eyes instantly turned red, and he roared angrily, "You old bastard, Dong Fanyu!"

"What's this about, apprentice-nephew Lu?" Adept Xu asked.

"Junior apprentice-brother Lu, previously, I went to visit you and we chatted happily. Why do you curse at me upon seeing me now? I came to deliver to the Lu clan a chance to obtain a great merit." Dong Fanyu felt completely puzzled.

Lu Huang was enraged. Pointing at Dong Fanyu, he said furiously, "Uncle-Master Xu, this Dong Fanyu previously came to my place to tell me about the elemental ore mine. Thus, our Copperwater branch sent two Zifu Disciples, one from my Lu clan and one from the An clan. But just a

short time ago, the life tablets of both the member of the Lu clan and the nearby An clan were both suddenly shattered. My own little sister died. Dong Fanyu claims that this is a chance to render great merits, and claims that the puny Ji clan isn't worth worrying about. But in reality? Two of the Zifu Disciples of our Copperwater branch are dead! I'm heading straight for Snowdragon City to investigate this clearly and get some answers!"

"What, all dead?" Dong Fanyu was shocked.

"What's going on?" Adept Xu frowned as well, and the nearby Wu Qi was growing angry as well.

If this matter grew nettlesome, it would no longer be a chance to render a merit; it would be a calamity.

Dong Fanyu said frantically, "I didn't lie. It really is just the Ji clan. There are no other enemies. In addition, our Swallow Mountain branch invited quite a few Zifu Disciple comrades of our organization. How can...how can..."

"But it is a fact that the two Zifu Disciples which our Copperwater branch sent both died!" Lu Huang roared.

"I, Dong Fanyu, swear that if I lied to you, junior apprentice-brother Lu, then let my soul be shattered and never return to the cycle of reincarnation." Dong Fanyu said frantically.

Only after hearing this oath did Lu Huang's face become less ugly.

Immortal practitioners wouldn't easily swear oaths.

"Hmph." Lu Huang let out a cold snort.

"It seems Dong Fanyu didn't lie." Adept Xu said calmly. "That means something happened at Swallow Mountain. Apprentice-nephew Lu, follow me there."

Adept Xu no longer seemed as casual as before; instead, he was a bit cautious.

Swish!

The sailboat immediately pierced through the skies, advancing towards

Swallow Mountain at high speed.

.....

Oxhorn Mountain. Within the Netherwurm Heavenlock Formation.

Ji Ning was seated in the lotus position.

Flying swords were hovering around him. When he had previously killed those eight Zifu Disciples, he had searched their storage magic treasures... and had found fifteen flying swords. The most pleasant surprise for Ning was that hawk-nosed cultivator; the hawk-nosed cultivator's storage treasure actually held a total of nine flying swords...and it seemed as though those nine flying swords came from the same source. They all carried a frigid, icy aura.

Upon finding this, Ning was immediately overjoyed. "Good, good, good. They come from the same source. The formation base they can create will be much stronger. This hawk-nosed man...was the hardest to kill of the eight. I didn't expect he would have so much treasure."

Although Ning didn't know the hawk-nosed cultivator's name, he knew that when he had first launched the assassination attempt against them, the hawk-nosed man seemed to have sensed the oncoming danger and had suddenly used a giant umbrella to protect himself. Ning had planned to make him the first target, but was forced to instead switch to a different one. Afterwards, when they fought head on with their most powerful attacks, Ning had to release three sword lights to kill him.

"Prior to this, I had thirteen ranked flying swords. Now I acquired fifteen more ranked flying swords, and have a total of twenty eight...that's enough to create three formation bases."

Ning naturally immediately began to bind these flying swords, wasting no time.

Without question, his [Lesser Thousand Swords Formation] would now have those nine frigid flying swords that came from the same origin as the core.

"Whew." Ning opened his eyes. "Done."

The fifteen new flying swords had all been bound.

“Let me test them.”

Ning willed it...

Whoosh...

Seven hundred-plus flying swords appeared in the air, with twenty seven of them being ranked that formed three formation bases! The nine frigid flying swords formed the core, controlling and guiding the entire [Lesser Thousand Swords Formation].

“Eh?” Ning’s face changed; his head hurt as though it were about to split apart.

To divide one’s mind sufficiently in order to control so many flying swords and to set up the ninth level of the [Lesser Thousand Swords Formation] simply required too much out of the soul, especially with ranked flying swords involved...to control a single ranked flying sword was more difficult than controlling ten unranked flying swords!

“There’s no way I can activate the ninth level of the [Lesser Thousand Swords Formation]?” Ning’s first attempt resulted in failure. He was unable to activate it fully. “I simply added eighteen more ranked flying swords, but I’m unable to use the ninth level of the [Lesser Thousand Swords Formation]?”

“That’s not right.”

Ning continued to test it.

The flying swords around him began to move about, changing their locations.

“Yin and Yang transform, endlessly engendering each other!” Ning suddenly thought of the critical barrier needed to break through the seventh stage of the [Scarlet Diagram of the Nine Shining Heavens]. The book discussed ‘Yin and Yang transforming, endlessly engendering each other’. Now, while analyzing this formation...he suddenly began to understand this principal. If he were to focus on gaining insights at this

moment, in perhaps just an hour or just a few days, he would break through to the seventh stage of the [Scarlet Diagram of the Nine Shining Heavens]!

But Ning didn't choose to meditate, because even if he rose in strength as a Fiendgod Body Refiner, it wouldn't increase his power much!

This was because he was borrowing the power of the Netherwurm Heavenlock Formation...his elemental energy was a good deal stronger than even a peak Zifu Adept's. He also borrowed from his Sword Domain and the [Lesser Thousand Swords Formation], which was why he was capable of such power. Even if he rose in power as a Fiendgod Refiner, it wouldn't help him much in battle. Moreover, he didn't have the time at all to leisurely meditate on these matters right now.

"Yin and Yang transform, endlessly engendering each other." Ning stared at those twenty seven flying swords.

The nine frigid flying swords served as the core.

The other flying swords in the formation bases swirled around these nine frigid flying swords. They slowly swirled about them, and even began to slowly intersect with them. The power of the formation began to activate, and two formation bases slowly merged into one.

"Right."

"Yin and Yang mutually transform..." Ning's eyes lit up. "One serves as the core. Two serve to supplement. The others serve as everything else."

Rumble...

The seven hundred-plus flying swords hovered around Ji Ning. A faint, incomparably powerful ripple suddenly formed. In front of Ning, an incomparably fierce, sharp sword light had taken shape. This sword light was now completely in the shape of a flying sword; it was nothing more than a flying sword that flashed with light.

"Ahhhh!" Ning felt his head hurt, as though he were being stabbed. Still, his face had an excited smile appear on it. "Hahaha, success, success."

Although he had gained insight into the mysteries of how Yin and Yang transform and endlessly engender each other, making it possible for him to use the now much stronger ninth level of the [Lesser Thousand Swords Formation]...Ning was still at his absolute limit. Clearly, his soul felt tremendous pressure right now.

“Best to use the eighth level.” Ning quickly removed eighty one ordinary flying swords, but continued to maintain the hovering formation.

“Sword light.”

Ning once more formed a ray of sword light.

This was sword light formed from the eighth level of the [Lesser Thousand Swords Formation]. The sword light still appeared like a flying sword, except the sword was not as clear as before.

“I feel as though the power is still a bit greater than it was when I used the [Lesser Thousand Swords Formation] to kill Dong Ziqi’s group.” Ning revealed a hint of joy on his face. When he had killed Dong Ziqi’s group, his [Lesser Thousand Swords Formation] had nine ranked flying swords, but he now had twenty seven...back then, he was using the ninth level of the [Lesser Thousand Swords Formation], but he was currently now using the eighth.

The current eighth level was even more powerful than the former ninth level.

Actually, the reason why the improvement was this noticeable was primarily because...the core was now those ranked frigid flying swords that came from the same location.

“Swoosh!” Ning collected the flying swords, then hurried at high speed towards the Patriarch.

He quickly arrived.

“Ji Ning.” Ji Ninefire and Ji Ishwin both looked at the suddenly arrived Ning.

“Patriarch, these are the magic treasures, Dao-seals, medicine pills, and



other items that belonged to those Zifu Disciples I killed.” Ning said. “I’ve kept these things, but the others are useless to me. I’ll give them to you, Patriarch...some of these spirit pills are able to replenish elemental energy. They are very useful to us.”

Ninefire nodded. Not hesitating, he accepted the bracelet that Ning handed over.

“I’ll go deal with Jadechild now.” Ning said.

“Be careful.” The nearby Ishwin warned.

“Don’t worry, Father.” Ning cracked a smile, then turned and, under the guidance of Ninefire, moved through the parted black fog and hurried towards Jadechild.

.....

The Netherwurm Heavenlock Formation was filled with that abyssal aura.

“Why hasn’t he come yet?” Jadechild stood there like a Fiendgod, his aura rising to the heavens, his long azure hair unbound, and surges of divine power thrumming through him. He was currently in the formation of the enemy, after all; he had to keep his divine power flowing, so as to be able to release his most powerful combat abilities at any moment.

“Senior apprentice-brother Jadechild, Ji Ning is only sixteen years old. Prior to this, when he killed our other fellow apprentices, he must have used some tricks. But you, senior apprentice-brother, are a Fiendgod Refiner and have a divine ability. Those tricks will be useless against you. He’s probably afraid.”

“He is almost certainly afraid and hiding.”

Those Zifu Disciples all agreed.

Jadechild just stood there, his gaze sweeping into the darkness ahead of him. He couldn’t help but wonder as well...was Ning truly afraid? If he wasn’t, given that he knew that Nong Zidao was currently analyzing how to break the formation, why had so much time passed after Ji Ning killing

Dong Ziqi's group of Zifu Disciples? Why hadn't he come?

He had no idea that Ning was currently binding flying swords.

"Hmph. The more we delay, the more confidence junior apprentice-brother Zidao will have. Once we break this Netherwurm Heavenlock Formation! Without the formation, you will all die." Jadechild said with great confidence.

Suddenly...

Rustle...faint lines of drizzling rain suddenly appeared out of nowhere. The rain was icy cold, and it fell down like foggy mist, spreading outwards. It was, however, blocked by the six mation formation and rendered unable to advance at all.

"Rainwater!"

"It is rainwater!" The other Zifu Disciples revealed looks of shock on their faces. Prior to this, Dong Ziqi had told the others that this rainwater...signified danger and perhaps death.

"Rainwater!" A golden light flashed in Jadechild's eyes. He let out an angry growl, and then his body emanated a dazzling golden as the entire body began to increase in size. Rumble...he transformed into a nearly two-story tall giant. The Zifu Disciples next to him were only as tall as his kneecap. His breaths created tempests that caused the surrounding space to crackle and explode. His footsteps caused the entire world to seem to tremble.

Divine ability – Heavenly Transformation!

The pupils of the eyes of this giant shot out golden light, and the giant roared loudly, "Ji Ning, come out and do battle!"

This deep voice caused his voice to echo, even within his own chest.

# Chapter 18: Ji Ning Battles Jadechild (Part 2)

The drizzling rain drifted down gently.

Jadechild's entire body was covered with a layer of golden light. He looked like a gold armored Fiend, and his eyes were filled with solidified golden light. His very breath caused the surrounding area to tremble.

Crackle! Crackle! Crackle!

The formerly soft, gentle rain suddenly became as sharp as knives. The countless raindrops wildly chopped towards the giant Jadechild, but the hazy golden light covering the giant Jadechild's body effortlessly deflected them. He swept his gaze towards the surrounding areas. Suddenly, a ripple caught Jadechild by surprise. Without hesitating at all, he sent a fist smashing over!

A wheel-sized golden fist smashed against one particular line of rain. This line of rain was the transformed sword flash of the [Lesser Thousand Swords Formation].

His fist was covered with a black glove, but it was also covered by that hazy golden light right now. Only if one looked closely would one see that beneath the golden light, there was a glove.

His most powerful magic treasure was that glove!

"BANG!" An explosive sound. The giant Jadechild couldn't help but be knocked a step back by that attack, and his backwards step caused the ground to tremble violently and fracture repeatedly.

"What an impressive Ji Ning." The giant Jadechild narrowed his eyes. That line of rain had actually contained such astonishing power. It was definitely at the Wanxiang Adept level. No wonder that earlier group of Zifu Disciples had all been killed.

"Formidable."

"He was actually able to make senior apprentice-brother Jadechild take a

step back.”

The hearts of the other Zifu Disciples instantly grew taut. They understood that the difference between Ji Ning and their senior apprentice-brother Jadechild probably wasn't that great.

“You are Jadechild?” A clear, cold voice rang out. From within the black fog, an enormous draconic tail began to move, and in the center of it was a fur clad youth. The fur clad youth was wielding a sword in each hand, and around him, a lotus flower was blooming and swiveling. Surrounded by the Fire-Water Lotus, he walked over.

“Ji Ning!” The giant Jadechild stared at this youth. He could sense an incomparably deep, profound mystery from that blooming lotus flower. He vaguely understood that in terms of the ‘Dao’, the youth in front of him probably had an even deeper understanding than he did.

A monster!

He was only sixteen years of age, but had actually reached such a deep level of understanding when it came to the Dao.

.....

Wielding the Darknorth Swords in his hands, Ning strode forward. But upon seeing Jadechild, Ning was greatly shocked. A golden light covered that massive, cliff-like, two-story high body. That invisible, powerful Fiendgod aura made even Ning feel pressure. Ning was probably only as high as the enemy's kneecaps.

“This is the Heavenly Transformation?” Ning mused to himself. He had heard of this divine ability long ago, as this was known to be the most famous of the divine abilities.

Divine abilities were very precious and very rare.

Generally speaking, only supreme clans, sects, and cults had access to them. However, the majority of them used this ability, ‘Heavenly Transformation’! Even in the Raindragon Guards, this divine ability was extremely famous. As the most widespread divine ability, if one wanted to learn it, naturally, the difficulty level would be a bit lower.

But this didn't mean that the Heavenly Transformation divine ability was weak! The prerequisites for this divine ability was low, but when trained to a very high level, it was comparable to some truly formidable divine abilities! When the Fiendgods of the primordial eras battled, they loved to use the Heavenly Transformation ability. With a single movement, one could increase to three hundred meters, three thousand meters, or even thirty thousand meters in height.

Those towering, cliff-like Fiendgod bodies could even pick up a mountain range that was thousands of kilometers long as easily as picking up a strand of straw. For them, overturning a sea or flipping over a river was just like taking a bath!

From this, one could see how powerful this divine ability was...

But of course, those were simply ancient myths, like the myth of Houyi shooting down the suns. It was far too distant from them!

“Ji Ning.” Suddenly, a gentle voice rang out.

Ning, who was about to do battle with the giant Jadechild, was suddenly startled. Ning looked over to the origin of that voice. Within that tower of black light, there was an old man with simple clothes and unbound hair. That man was smiling as he looked at Ning. “Your talent and potential is truly astonishing. But what is even more precious is that you were able to reach this level despite being in an ordinary, regional clan. You are certainly a rarely seen piece of unpolished jade. Your value far outstrips the value of this elemental ore mine.

Ning frowned.

The giant Jadechild was startled, as were the other Zifu Disciples as well.

“If you are willing, then I am willing to swear an oath that I will guarantee your entrance into our Snowdragon Mountain sect.” Nong Zidao said with a smile. “Given your talent, you will definitely become one of the most important and most core disciples, the ‘heir-disciples’. Upon entering our school, your status will be no lower than that of a Wanxiang Adept. Our Snowdragon Mountain will definitely expend tremendous effort in training you, making you become a true, supreme expert. In the

future, even becoming a Primal Daoist...is possible!”

Jadechild was startled, but then he too said in a low voice. “Ji Ning, since junior apprentice-brother Zidao is willing to swear an oath, then you don’t need to worry about this. If you join our Snowdragon Mountain, we naturally won’t hold any grudges about what happened before this. But if you refuse...then don’t blame me for being ruthless!”

Ning was surprised.

They were trying to pull him into Snowdragon Mountain?

“I killed so many of your fellow apprentices, but you’ll let me enter your school?” Ning said coldly.

“If they died, they died.” Nong Zidao shook his head. “You are different from them. Our Snowdragon Mountain has plenty of those average, ordinary Zifu Disciples! But your talent and your current level of comprehension...I truly have never seen anyone like you in all my life. As long as I make the introductions, the Primal Daoists of our Snowdragon Mountain sect will definitely accept you as a disciple.”

Ning, too, had heard his parents say that given his talents, it would be utter simplicity for him to take roof under any of the major powers. Even the spirit of the underwater estate had clearly shown a markedly better attitude towards him after he had comprehended his Rainwater Sword Domain.

To gain insight into the Rainwater Sword Domain at age sixteen...

This sort of talent was indeed monstrous.

“The results of this grudge between your Ji clan and my Snowdragon Mountain have been the deaths of Snowdragon Mountain disciples only. Within this formation, not a single member of your Ji clan has perished. I imagine that you have no reason to feel hatred towards my Snowdragon Mountain.” Nong Zidao then said, “Since we have no hatred for each other, while you yourself come from a regional clan and have a completely clean history, and are so monstrously talented, why wouldn’t the main sect use all of its efforts to cultivate you? In a few hundred years, it’s even

possible that you will become the Sect Leader of our Snowdragon Mountain.”

The giant Jadechild also spoke out. “If you join our Snowdragon Mountain, then what happened before will be of little consequence. But if you do not join Snowdragon Mountain...given how many of our fellow apprentices your Ji clan has killed, for the sake of our face, Snowdragon Mountain will definitely annihilate your Ji clan. Consider this carefully.”

“Consider this well.” Nong Zidao said as well.

Two options.

One to join them; that would make them all one family. As for the dead? That would have simply been a case where a heir-disciple of extremely exalted status killed a few outer disciples. A small matter.

The other option was to refuse. To have killed so many disciples was an affront to Snowdragon Mountain.

“Hahaha...” Ning laughed. How could he join Snowdragon Mountain? Just now, Nong Zidao had said that there was no enmity between their sides, and that Ning’s history was clean, that he was monstrously talented, and that Snowdragon Mountain would focus on training him...

But loyalty would be the number one thing a sect would consider in cultivating its disciples.

Before accepting him as an heir-disciple, Snowdragon Mountain would definitely do a thorough, close investigation of his history. By then, the events which happened to Ji Ishwin and Yuchi Snow would probably be revealed! Snowdragon Mountain had caused the deaths of Ning’s mother and uncle...given what a huge enmity lay between them, Snowdragon Mountain would never dare to train Ning, no matter how talented he was. Instead, it would want to destroy him as soon as possible, to prevent him from becoming a problem in the future!

“Cut the crap.” Ning barked. “Don’t even think of trying to dissuade me.”

“Ji Ning, you...” Nong Zidao, within that black tower, shook his head. “One step wrong leads to countless steps wrong. If you join Snowdragon

Mountain now...it isn't too late yet."

"Kill!"

Ning didn't waste any more words.

Just on the basis of the 'loyalty' issue alone...Ning would be finished once they ran a background investigation on him. It was best to follow his previous plans; annihilate all of these fellows immediately, and delay until the Darcian Dynasty's Angel arrived! Once the Angel arrived, they would have the protection of the Darcian Dynasty...even if Snowdragon Mountain was a hundred times as bold, they would never dare to do anything. They would have to swallow it.

As long as he had enough time...Snowdragon Mountain? He would eventually rip them apart!

"Then die!" The giant Jadechild smiled savagely as he stomped hard against the ground.

Rumble...

The earth trembled, and countless shattered rocks and sand flew about. Within the flying sand and rocks, there could faintly be seen countless granules of sand that flashed with golden light. These golden specks of sand wildly swirled about like a giant whirlpool which surrounded the giant Jadechild, with a portion of the golden sand wildly charging towards Ning.

This was the magic treasure which the giant Jadechild often used...the 'Stellar Sands'!

"Thud! Thud! Thud!" The giant Jadechild stomped on the ground, leaving behind a giant golden blur as he charged towards Ning with crushing force.

"Hmph."

The rainwater surrounding Ning formed itself into a resilient curtain of water. The translucent water curtain was constantly swirling...when the golden sand struck wildly against it, they were all forcibly stopped by the



watery curtain.

“Die!” A wheel-sized golden fist smashed through the watery curtain. In the fact of that punch, even the blooming Fire-Water Lotus seemed incomparably weak.

“What astonishing speed.” Ning’s face changed slightly as the black wings behind him suddenly trembled.

Divine ability – Windwing Evasion!

Whoosh!

The golden fist smashed through the Fire-Water Lotus and pierced past Ning’s frame, but there was no hint of delight on the giant Jadechild’s face. This was because it was just an ‘afterimage’ that his fist had punched through. Ning’s speed was simply too fast, and he was too agile; he had instantly dodged.

“There’s no use. You won’t be able to escape.” The giant Jadechild took a step forward, causing the earth to crack. He himself once more transformed into a golden light as he charged towards Ning, and his fist easily tore apart the watery curtain and the Fire-Water Lotus.

“Too fast.” Ning was forced to dodge again.

Whoosh...

After having used the Windwing Evasion three times in a row, Ning finally managed to pull away from him. Ning discovered that...in terms of straight line movements, this giant Jadechild was actually even faster than he was! After having executed the Heavenly Transformation and increased in size, Jadechild’s speed and strength rose to an astonishing level. Ning didn’t dare face him head on.

This was because, when he had used the [Lesser Thousand Swords Formation] earlier, the enemy had used his fist to block it, and had only been forced a single step back. From this, one could tell how powerful that fist was.

Fortunately, Ning had the Windwing Evasion, and so had a bit of an

advantage in terms of agility. He was also more nimble to begin with, given his smaller size, while the giant Jadechild was so large that his turning ability was naturally inferior.

“[Lesser Thousand Swords Formation].” Seven hundred flying swords suddenly appeared round Ji Ning, but amongst them, only six hundred or so glowed with white light. Ning had only activated the eighty level of the [Lesser Thousand Swords Formation].

A sword flash materialized in front of his chest.

“Go.”

“Go.”

“Go!”

While using the Windwing Evasion to dodge, Ning simultaneously released six rays of sword light. The six rays of sword light merged into rainwater, then disappeared, transforming into lines of rain...silently, soundless, the six went sweeping towards the direction of the giant Jadechild.

# Chapter 19: Ji Ning Battles Jadechild (Part 3)

“Crackle...”

The countless golden grains of the Stellar Sands were swirling around the giant Jadechild. When the six rays of sword light that had transformed into lines of rain wished to pass through them, the Stellar Sands would naturally be knocked flying away.

The giant Jadechild roared loudly, “Ambushing me?”

His fist suddenly unclenched and expanded into his giant, fan-shaped palm. Whooooosh. He swiped out towards the surrounding area, as fast as a blur. His two giant palms instantly formed a protective barrier around himself.

“Bang! Bang! Bang!” Consecutive explosive sounds.

The six rays of sword light had all been stopped!

“What a fast palm technique.” The distant Ning, seeing this, was astonished. “Although his body increased in size after using his divine ability, resulting in him becoming a bit less agile, his palms are still astonishing fast!”

“Ji Ning, accept death!” The giant Jadechild’s body transformed into a golden blur as he charged straight towards Ji Ning.

“Go.” The black wings behind Ning’s body trembled, and at the same time, a sword light formed in front of him.

Boom!

As soon as the sword light flew out, it was smashed apart by the giant Jadechild.

“Die.” The giant Jadechild was like a fiendish god, his face savage. His twin fists swung out towards Ning like a pair of meteors!

Back! Back! Back!

Ning used his Windwing Evasion at full strength. Because the giant Jadechild was much faster, Ning had to rely on his agility to dodge. He wasn't able to pull away at all; it was like dancing atop a steel wire!

If one walked too long by the sides of a river, eventually, one's shoes would grow wet!

"Whoosh!" The giant Jadechild was clearly to the right, but suddenly his fist suddenly appeared and smashed straight towards Ning.

Bang! The rainwater was knocked flying!

Whoosh! The blooming Fire-Water Lotus was completely crushed!

Ning wielded two swords in his hands, and they transformed into two streaks of flowing water. The light of his swords was soft and gentle as they struck forward to welcome the oncoming, attacking golden fist.

"Bang!" A giant collision. Jadechild felt as though his fists had smashed into something that was incomparably slick and soft, that couldn't be affected by his power. He had the feeling that his punch had missed, or that it had been pulled astray.

"Bang." Ning himself was knocked flying back tens of meters, and a wound had appeared at the joints of his palms, although it then quickly healed.

"What a fellow." Ning was shocked by the power of that punch.

He had power that surpassed that of a peak Zifu Ki Refiner, and also the Rainwater Sword Domain. The Darknorth Swords also surpassed ordinary Mortal-rank magic treasures. In terms of close combat, although he was a bit weaker than when using the sword light of the [Lesser Thousand Swords Formation], he was probably still close to the Wanxiang Adept level. And yet, when they clashed head on, even when he focused on defense, he was knocked flying.

"He actually didn't die!" The distant, giant Jadechild stared, astonished.

.....

When the giant Jadechild had struck Ning, the nearby Zifu Disciples,

including Nong Zidao, were all extremely excited. But upon seeing that Ning was simply knocked flying without being damaged at all, all of them were incomparably disappointed.

“How could it end up this way?”

“Senior apprentice-brother Jadechild used the Heavenly Transformation divine ability. How powerful much his punches be? How could this person not have been smashed to death?”

All of the Zifu Disciples felt a chill in their hearts.

“Senior apprentice-brother Jadechild, we will help you.”

“We will help.”

These frantic Zifu Disciples all unleashed their own techniques.

.....

As Ning was sent flying dozens of meters back by Jadechild, a fierce look flashed through his eyes. All of the seven hundred-plus flying swords around him lit up. This was the first time during Ning’s battle with Jadechild that he had used the ninth level of the [Lesser Thousand Swords Formation].

His head instantly felt a splitting, piercing pain!

“Go!” The sword light that had appeared in front of Ning, shaped like a true sword, transformed into a line of rain.

“Go!” “Go!” “Go!” “Go!”

Ning, relying on their earlier exchange of blows, pulled farther away, then launched five attacks of the ninth level of the [Lesser Thousand Swords Formation]. And then, he immediately came to a halt. Just launching five attacks of the ninth level of the [Lesser Thousand Swords Formation] had made his soul almost unable to take it any longer. Naturally, he halted.

“Die!” Ning’s eyes were filled with eagerness.

This was his most powerful, supreme attack. It had to succeed.

“Useless.” The giant Jadechild was surrounded by those countless flying specks of Stellar Sand. Ordinary raindrops were completely unable to break through them. When the first sword light under Ning’s control pierced through the Stellar Sands, the giant Jadechild glanced at the line of rain, then smashed over with a giant palm atop that rain line.

BANG!!!

The giant Jadechild shook violently. Boomboomboom...he took three hurried steps back, causing the surrounding ground to tremble violently.

The other four rays of sword light attacked from up ahead and from behind.

“How can he be so strong?” The giant Jadechild felt as though his arm was turning numb from pain. However, given the astonishing regenerative speed of his Fiendgod body, he wasn’t afraid. He hurriedly exerted his strength to block the other sword light rays.

Bang! Bang!

Each time he blocked them, he took several steps back. This impacted his agility. He wasn’t careful, and so two lines of ray still chopped past his fists, slicing directly towards his chest. Crackle...the rain line chopped down against the giant Jadechild’s body like a knife. However, his body, covered with that hazy golden light, was incomparably tough. By the time the sword light chopped through his protective armor and began to chop against his body, it found it quite difficult to advance.

Crackle...it just barely managed to leave a large wound on Jadechild’s body, then vanished.

The other flash of sword light also simply left a wound before disappearing.

“What!” Ning stared, wide-eyed.

He understood now.

While activating the ‘Heavenly Transformation’ divine ability, Jadechild’s body had increased tremendously in size. And thus, the level of

difficulty for chopping Jadechild's body in half had risen as well. This was because Jadechild's body was simply too thick, and every single strand of flesh and muscle had also risen in strength and endurance. The ninth level of his [Lesser Thousand Swords Formation] had only been able to leave a wound on Jadechild's body.

"You injured me?" Jadechild bellowed as he charged over.

"Senior apprentice-brother Jadechild, we'll help you."

"Ji Ning, prepare for death."

The other distant, spectating Zifu Disciples all unleashed their various magic treasures and techniques as they flew towards Ning.

"Retreat." Ji Ning hurriedly activated his wings and retreated at high speed.

The surrounding rainwater began to swivel, spinning into layers of protective curtains that blocked these magic treasures. The magic treasures of these Zifu Disciples...weren't able to penetrate these layers of protection at all. From this, one could see how terrifying Ning's 'Rainwater Sword Domain' was.

As for Jadechild, he smashed straight through the protective curtains of rain.

"Retreat." Ning had completely changed his strategy.

While controlling the rainwater to form one layer after another of resilient water to block and slow down his opponent, Ning also generated Fire-Water Loti around Jadechild! The Fire-Water Loti around Ning...served as a form of protection. But once the Fire-Water Loti appeared around Jadechild, they served as a form of binding.

"Break." Jadechild forcibly smashed apart the Fire-Water Lotus, then through one watery curtain after another, seeking to chase after Ning.

Ning used almost all of his concentration on controlling the rainwater and the Fire-Water Loti. Once he focused his energy on controlling them, it was only natural that the Fire-Water Loti could constantly bloom and

spread out, blocking his foe. Those watery curtains continuously formed as well, one lafter another...faced with so many layers of bindings, the giant Jadechild's speed naturally dropped dramatically. He wasn't able to catch Ning at all.

"Dao Domain." The distant Nong Zidao, secreted within the black tower of light, narrowed his eyes. "It really is a Dao Domain. That rainwater forming into one protective wall after another is actually this powerful... Dao Domain. Only sixteen years ago, and yet he has gained insight into a Dao Domain. What a monster!"

Prior to this, he wasn't yet certain.

But once Ning focused all his power on unleashing the might of his Dao Domain, using countless amounts of rainwater to block, Nong Zidao and Jadechild, these two experts with tremendous amounts of experience, knew for certain that this was a Dao Domain. If this wasn't a Dao Domain, how could it be so powerful?

The Fire-Water Loti just bloomed, one after the other.

But the Rainwater Sword Domain was everywhere. Every single curtain of rainwater was somewhat weaker than a Fire-Water Lotus, but there was too much rain. This was quality born from quantity; Jadechild's speed naturally dropped.

"If you have any ability, fight me head on." Jadechild roared savagely. "What sort of ability is this, to rely on this sort of technique?"

"To be able to lock you down is a form of ability as well." Ning laughed coldly. "And in addition, by locking you down, I've ensured your death."

Jadechild's face changed.

"Indeed..." Ning saw the look on Jadechild's face. A thought came to his mind; he had guessed correctly.

Previously, when they had fought head on, Jadechild's strength had been simply too overbearing. Even by going all out and using the ninth level of the [Lesser Thousand Swords Formation], Ning had only been able to make him take three steps back. Even when he had landed a blow on



Jadechild's body, the sword light had only been able to leave behind an injury on that two-story-tall figure, then vanished. But the heavens were always fair.

The Heavenly Transformation divine ability allowed one to gain in strength and speed. Even one's endurance would rise dramatically, and one's size would increase as well...

With so many advantages, could it be that it had no disadvantages?

The disadvantage was...it used up an enormous amount of divine power! To maintain the Heavenly Transformation state used up an astonishing amount of divine power.

Ning had trained in the divine ability, 'Windwing Evasion'. Windwing Evasion was different from the Heavenly Transformation technique. The Windwing Evasion...focused on technique! But the Heavenly Transformation divine ability...was a sort of divine ability that relied on one's ability to control one's body.

The Windwing Evasion was a divine ability technique meant for flying about and evading. Those paintings of the giant Roc contained an incomparably deep and exquisite profoundness to them, while also a technique for using divine power! When Ning had been battling Bei Zishan, he had used up his divine power to activate the Windwing Evasion.

When one used divine power to activate a divine ability, the divine power could increase tenfold or a hundredfold in power, naturally making the divine ability powerful as well.

But Ning's 'divine power' in his Fiendgod body was only at the peak Xiantian level, while his elemental energy surpassed that of a peak Zifu-level Ki Refiner. By using his elemental energy to control the wing-type magic treasures in accordance to the intricacies of the Windwing Evasion, naturally he was still quite fast.

"Maintaining the Heavenly Transformation will use up astonishing amounts of divine power. I want to see how much you have." Ning mused to himself. "As for myself, the amount of energy I'm using up is negligible.

Both the Rainwater Sword Domain and the Fire-Water Lotus relies on activating the power of the heavens in order to take form.

“Ji Ning!”

The giant Jadechild bellowed. “All you are capable of is using these despicable methods.”

Ning just focused whole-heartedly on controlling the Rainwater Sword Domain and the Fire-Water Loti, frantically trying to entangle his foe. The giant Jadechild, as Ning had predicted, was using up an extremely astonishing amount of divine power while using his divine ability. The giant Jadechild didn’t dare to return to his normal state either, as if he did, Ning’s sword light would probably instantly chop apart and slaughter him.

.....

Roughly an hour later.

This was the last hour of Jadechild’s life. During this hour, he came to a halt, no longer going to smash against the Fire-Water Lotus or the curtains of rain. By not attacking, he was able to lower his expenditure of divine power. However...when he stopped moving, Ning would begin to control his sword light to attack. After Ning’s sword light left a wound on his body, he would have to use a large amount of divine power to heal.

Not battling wasn’t an option. Battling also wasn’t an option.

Jadechild’s divine power was finally used up, and reluctantly, his body returned to the size of a normal person’s.

Crackle...

A line of rain slashed past, and Jadechild’s head went flying, then landed on the ground. Given how his divine power had been completely used up, there was no way he could heal his wounds any longer. Naturally, he lost his life.

“Senior apprentice-brother Jadechild died.”

“Senior apprentice-brother Jadechild!”

The other Zifu Disciples were all incomparably terrified, but within the

Netherwurm Heavenlock Formation, they were completely unable to flee.

“It’s all over.” Within the black tower of light, Nong Zido stretched his hand out to stroke the Fairy Crane by his side. A hint of pain and pity was in his eyes. “Crane, I’m sorry. This trip to Swallow Mountain was in error. I’m unable to save you. Let us end our master-servant relationship now. I hope that the Ji clan will spare your life!” Within his other hand, a Dao-seal suddenly appeared.

Whoosh.

Suddenly, a spatial vibration appeared, then Nong Zidao’s body disappeared from within the tower of black light, leaving behind only the other five Zifu Disciples, the Landwurm, and the Fairy Crane.

The Fairy Crane let out a griefstricken bird call as tears began to flow from its eyes.

# Chapter 20: Lesser Teleportation Dao-Seal

“Nong Zidao disappeared?” Ji Ning frowned.

The other five Zifu Disciples were utterly terrified as well. Ning, with the assistance of the grand formation, was absolutely at the Wanxiang Adept level of power. The five of them weren't even enough to join into a formation of their own.

“Ji Ning, please spare our lives.”

“I offer to you all of the magic treasures that I am carrying. My clan will also offer up magic treasures in exchange for my life.”

“Ji Ning...”

The five of them were all begging, without any hint of a martial spirit.

Ning swept the five of them with his gaze.

“Ji Ning.” A voice suddenly rang out by his ears. “We've destroyed these two groups of Zifu Disciples, but two more days will pass before the Darcian Dynasty arrives...within these two days, more disciples of Snowdragon Mountain might arrive. There is no way for us to watch over and guard these people. Kill them all. As for those two Zifu-level Greater Monsters, if you are able to make them submit, do so. If not, kill them!”

Ning nodded.

The Patriarch's words were reasonable.

“All of you, accept death.” Ning looked at them and spoke calmly.

In front of his body, that flashing sword light suddenly transformed into a line of rainwater and flew towards them. It was immediately followed by yet another flash of sword light.

These were all only at the eighth level of the [Lesser Thousand Swords Formation]!

“Ji Ning, Snowdragon Mountain will definitely avenge us.”

“Ji Ning, you will die a miserable death!”

These five seemed to have gone berserk. All of them wanted to go all out, but given that they weren't able to join in a formation, even though they threw out some powerful Dao-seals...upon encountering that curtain of water, they immediately exploded, unable to touch Ning at all.

Within a few moments, all five of them perished.

"Do you two spirit-beasts submit?" Ning swept his gaze towards the still-living Landwyrm and Fairy Crane.

The Landwyrm and the Fairy Crane looked at each other, and then the Landwyrm transformed into a large, azure-armored man, while the Fairy Crane transformed into a white-robed maiden. The azure-armored man and the white-robed maiden all immediately fell to their knees. "We are willing to submit!"

Although Zifu-level Greater Monsters were incomparably arrogant and hard to tame, when they were faced with only two options, to perish or to submit...they would generally submit, especially when the opponent's power completely surpassed their own.

"Follow me." Ning's gaze flashed, and the falling rain disappeared. Immediately afterwards, a surge of blazing fire swept out, rendering the corpses of the five Zifu Disciples into ash, leaving behind only their magic treasures, which Ning easily collected.

"Yes." The Landwyrm and the Celestial Crane all followed after Ning.

Soon, they passed through the layers of black fog and arrived in front of Ji Ninefire.

"Eh?" Ning was surprised. In front of him, aside from the Patriarch and his father, Ji Truekeep, Granny Shadow, and Ah Xing had all arrived as well.

"I asked them to come." Ninefire laughed. "Both groups of Zifu Disciples are dead. For now, we have no opponents, so I had them all come over."

"Ji Ning. Formidable." Truekeep's eyes were shining.

"Formidable, formidable." Old servant Ah Xing's face was filled with

delight as well.

Granny Shadow laughed and nodded as well.

All of them were very happy.

This was because, in just two or three short days worth of time, Snowdragon Mountain would only be able to invite some Zifu Disciples from nearby regions to come over...and as for the main Snowdragon Mountain Sect, it was simply too far away. There was no way they would be able to make it over in two or three short days. Having killed eighteen Zifu Disciples and tamed two spirit-beasts, the threat level had dropped dramatically.

“Unfortunately, we allowed Nong Zidao to flee.” Patriarch Ninefire shook his head.

“Patriarch, how did he escape? Why did he suddenly disappear?” Ning asked hurriedly. Granny Shadow and the others all looked towards the Patriarch as well. They had just gathered together, and so they hadn’t had a chance to ask about these things in detail.

Ninefire shook his head. “I don’t know either. He simply disappeared. There’s no trace of him in the entire formation. However, if we ask his spirit-beast, I imagine it will know.”

The eyes of Ning and the others lit up. Right. Ask the spirit-beast.

“Fairy Crane.” Ninefire looked at the white-robed maiden. “How did Nong Zidao escape?”

The white-robed woman said respectfully, “My former owner was skilled in formations. He was valued by his master, and so was given a ‘Lesser Teleportation Dao-Seal’. This Dao-seal, upon being used, will instantly allow one to teleport to any location within ten thousand kilometers.”

“A Lesser Teleportation Dao-Seal?” Ning and the others looked at each other.

Ning quietly memorized this name. It seemed as though this Lesser Teleportation Dao-Seal was the same thing as his so-called ‘Traceless

Talisman'. The Traceless Talisman had been acquired in a fortuitous encounter by an ancestor of the Ji clan of the West Prefecture, who had used up two, leaving only one behind. Because it allowed one to teleport within ten thousand kilometers without a trace, it had been named the 'Traceless Talisman'.

"Patriarch, what should we do with these two spirit-beasts?" Ning looked at Ninefire. The other five all looked at each other as well.

"Ji Ning, are you willing to accept them?" Ninefire asked Ning.

Ning looked at the Landwurm and the Fairy Crane. Zifu-level spirit-beasts were very precious. Ordinary Zifu Disciples wouldn't be able to acquire them, but in truth...Ning didn't care about these two Zifu spirit-beasts. If Ning took some time to focus on his insights, in anywhere from a few hours to a few days, he would break through to the seventh level, as a Fiendgod Body Refiner.

In but a few years, he would reach the ninth level as an Fiendgod Body Refiner of the [Scarlet Diagram of the Nine Shining Heavens]! By then, Zifu-level spirit-beasts would truly be useless to him; in fact, they would slow him down.

"I have no need." Ning shook his head.

"Since that's the case..." Ninefire nodded. "Then I will temporarily accept them. After we overcome this tribulation, I will then divide them up."

"Fine."

"That's what we'll do, then."

Truekeep, Granny Shadow, Ishwin, and the others all nodded without any debate. It was too early to discuss who the spirit-beasts would go to. Nobody knew which of them would survive this tribulation.

"These are the magic treasures left behind by that Jadechild." Ning waved his hand, and a large amount of magic treasures immediately appeared on the ground. "Everyone, take a look and see which are useful. If you find any flying swords...various elders, please help me prepare them for binding. I need to find a place to train; just now, in battle, I gained

some slight insights.”

“Alright. Leave it to us.” Ninefire and the others didn’t hesitate at all.

“Right.” Ning’s body flickered as he immediately departed at high speed.

The Landwurm and the Fairy Crane, in the form of the azure-armored warrior and the white-robed maiden, were both rather disappointed. In truth, they desired to become Ning’s spirit-beasts.

First of all, they bore no hatred for Ning, as the Landwurm had, for example, been forcibly subdued by Jadechild in the past. Although the Fairy Crane did have a close relationship with Nong Zidao, since Zidao had given her up and fled for his life, it could be said that the karmic binds between them had come to an end.

Secondly, Ning was only sixteen years old. A monster like this would have unlimited potential; if they followed a master like him, their own future would be bright as well.

Unfortunately, Ning wasn’t willing to accept them.

.....

Ning was seated in the lotus position within the mountainous forests, surrounded by dark energy.

“Yin and Yang transform, endlessly engendering each other.” Ning murmured to himself, then closed his eyes and began to meditate on it. Prior to this, when he had analyzing the [Lesser Thousand Swords Formation], he had come to a realization...that all of the great Daos of the world were, in truth, similar. Formations, swordplay, magic, divine abilities...they all contained the ‘Dao’.

The Dao was the same. Only, the paths of the Dao were different.

Ning understood this principle...and so naturally, it now became much easier for him to break through, from the sixth to the seventh stage of the [Scarlet Diagram of the Nine Shining Heavens].

“Yin and Yang transform!” Ning, his eyes closed, began to activate the divine power in his body...



In midair, a thousand kilometers away from Snowdragon City, space suddenly rippled, and a figure appeared out of nowhere. It was a fur-clad Nong Zidao.

Nong Zidao's eyes were filled with grief.

"If you encounter a formation, be cautious. Be cautious." Nong Zidao let out a soft sigh. "This is the most simple of principles, but we disciples of Snowdragon Mountain had all forgotten about it."

If you encounter a formation, be cautious. This was something all Immortal practitioners knew.

This was because formations were intricate and marvelous. No one could know what was within a formation, and upon entering it, one wouldn't even be able to flee! For example, the Wanxiang Adept, Adept Mu Xiao, knew that Bei Zishan was hidden within the formation, but because Bei Zishan had set up a formation, Adept Mu Xiao had chosen to instead wait patiently outside, rather than enter the formation.

But these disciples of Snowdragon Mountain had truly held their foes in too little regard.

Although they knew that upon encountering a formation, they should be cautious, they hadn't held the Ji clan in any regard at all. The Ji clan was nothing more than a local clan, and they had an understanding of the Ji clan's power. They didn't believe that the Ji clan would be capable of any powerful formations at all. In addition, they had Jadechild as well as a formations expert, Nong Zidao. They also had nearly twenty comrades...

Their power was simply too great.

They believed that they would completely dominate and crush a puny clan like the Ji clan. Because of their over-confidence, they had underestimated their foes, and so had become trapped in the formation, with no way to escape!

Jadechild. Even with the assistance of the Netherwurm Heavenlock Formation, Ning was only on par with Jadechild in power; Jadechild had only died after all of his divine power had been exhausted, rendering him

unable to use his divine ability. If they had fought outside the formation, upon seeing that the situation was turning grim, he could've fled. But within the formation, there was no place to run!

"If you encounter a formation, be cautious. But if we didn't enter...should we have simply allowed the Ji clan to delay? Watch as the Angel of the Darcian Dynasty came?" Nong Zidao shook his head and sighed.

"Formations...Ji Ning..."

"The Netherwyrms Heavenlock Formation, and a monster who gained insight into a Dao Domain at age sixteen. For me to encounter both these things in such a puny little local clan? My defeat was not an unjust one!" A flying ship appeared beneath Nong Zidao's feet, which immediately tore through the skies, flying at high speed towards Snowdragon City.

"No matter what, I have to go warn my other comrades, who are probably heading this way as well." Nong Zidao mused.

Of the first group of Zifu Disciples, the sole survivor was Nong Zidao.

If he didn't go warn the newcomers, in the future, when the main sect investigated this matter, he, Nong Zidao, would be censured.

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Moments later.

A distant city appeared within his field of vision.

"Eh?" Nong Zidao, atop the ship, saw that there were people in the air above the distant city.

That person flew over, as fast as a ray of light.

"Dong Fanyu?" Nong Zidao immediately recognized this old man.

"Senior apprentice-brother Zidao." Dong Fanyu, upon seeing Nong Zidao, immediately asked impatiently, "I heard that you, senior apprentice-brother Zidao, along with senior apprentice-brother Jadechild and a group of others all went to Oxhorn Mountain. Why have you come here, senior apprentice-brother Zidao? Also...the life-tablets of quite a few people who headed to Oxhorn Mountain have shattered. Even the life-

tablet of my own Dong clan's Patriarch, Dong Ziqi, has shattered. What happened at Oxhorn Mountain?"

Nong Zidao shook his head. "I feel ashamed. Aside from myself, every single one of our fellow disciples who went to Oxhorn Mountain perished."

"What?! All perished?!" Dong Fanyu was shocked. "So many fellow disciples all, all..."

"Aside from me, all of them died." Nong Zidao sighed. "I've come to warn you that Oxhorn Mountain is incredibly perilous. No matter what, do not enter. I don't want any other fellow disciples to suffer."

Dong Fanyu said frantically, "Can't be entered? But just now, Wanxiang Adept, Adept Xu Li, personally led a group of Zifu Disciples to head towards Oxhorn Mountain."

## Chapter 21: [Scarlet Diagram of the Nine Shining Heavens] - Stage Seven

“Adept Xu Li?” Nong Zidao was shocked. As a valued, intensively trained disciple of Snowdragon Mountain, Nong Zidao naturally was quite familiar with Adept Xu. He knew that Adept Xu wasn’t too skilled in the Dao of formations. Actually, the vast majority of Immortal practitioners with great potential were unskilled in formations; they would focus their efforts on training, on gaining insights into the Dao, on magic treasures, and on magic spells.

“How long ago did the Adept head there?” Nong Zidao hurriedly asked.

“Just a while ago, in less than the amount of time needed to brew tea. Adept Xu left just before you arrived, senior apprentice-brother Zidao.” Dong Fanyu said hurriedly.

Nong Zidao, shocked, immediately instructed: “Remember, if there are any other Zifu Disciples who arrive here, they can go to Oxhorn Mountain, but you must warn them...they are definitely not permitted to casually enter the grand formation of Oxhorn Mountain. That is the place where senior apprentice-brother Jadechild perished.”

“I will definitely inform the other fellow disciples.” Dong Fanyu immediately said.

“Right.” Nong Zidao had no time to speak any further; he immediately boarded his flying ship and flew through the skies, heading once more to Oxhorn Mountain.

.....

Oxhorn Mountain.

Ji Ninefire and the others paid attention to the region outside the grand formation while simultaneously binding the magic treasures. From their viewpoint on up high, they were able to see through the thin mist to the distant, desolate wilderness.

“All of the Zifu Disciples from the earlier group, aside from Nong Zidao, have perished. Our Ji clan even ended up acquiring two additional Zifu-level spirit-beasts.” Ji Truekeep was currently working on binding a flying sword, then said with a satisfied look on his face, “The Swallow Mountain branch of Snowdragon Mountain only had a few Zifu Disciples to begin with. With so many dead, I imagine there won’t be any other formidable figures who will come.”

“Yes.” Ninefire nodded with a satisfied smile as well.

“Our Ji clan now has hope.” Granny Shadow sighed in her hoarse voice as well.

From a logical standpoint, their expectations were correct.

The Angel of the Darcian Dynasty would be able to arrive in two days. The Swallow Mountain branch of Snowdragon Mountain simply wouldn’t be able to invite some more distant branches to assist in time. In addition, at most, forty or fifty Zifu Disciples could be invited over from the surrounding areas, and amongst them, the most powerful and famous were Jadechild and Nong Zidao! One had perished, while the other had fled; who else would dare to enter?

The only choice was to report back to the main sect, but the main sect was too far away. Most likely, the Ji clan would receive protection from the Darcian Dynasty well before the main sect had even received word of this matter.

“We are fortunate to have Ji NIng.” Ninefire sighed as he glanced at the nearby Ji Ishwin. “Ishwin. You have a good son.”

Ishwin couldn’t help but smile as well. With a son like Ning, how could he not be proud?

“Once this tribulation is over,” Granny Shadow said hoarsely, “Ji Ning will definitely leave our Ji clan and go out to adventure. Give his monstrous talents...I imagine that he should be able to take refuge within one of the great powers. By then, why would we need to fear Snowdragon Mountain?”

“Ji Ning’s future is unlimited!” Ji Truekeep sighed emotionally as well.

These were all the elites of the Ji clan, but compared to Ning...they felt a vast gap between them.

“Someone is coming.” Ninefire suddenly shouted.

“What?!”

Instantly, a great commotion. All of them turned to stare through the sparse black fog, only to see a boat sail through the skies towards their direction, with quite a few Immortal practitioners gathered together atop it.

“Who is it?”

“I haven’t seen any of them. Don’t recognize them.”

“I recognize one of them. That short old fellow is an Immortal practitioner of the Huan clan. The two of us have met once, but I don’t know his name.” Ninefire and the others could see a total of eight Zifu Disciples atop the boat, but they didn’t know the names of any of them. Only Ninefire was able to recognize a single one of them.

Truekeep immediately asked, “What should we do? Should we go call for Ji Ning?”

“Ji Ning is currently training within the formation.” Ninefire shook his head. “In addition, only eight have come. No need to be impatient.”

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The flying boat descended towards the ground, then vanished. The eight figures atop the boat disembarked. Not too far away, they saw a wood golem standing atop the ground. The eyes of the wood golem flashed with a green light as it looked towards them with curiosity.

“A golem.” Lu Huang said hurriedly. “Master-uncle, I will go take a look.”

Lu Huang immediately moved forward a few steps, but before he said anything, the wood golem spoke out: “Are you disciples of Snowdragon Mountain?”

“Yes.” Lu Huang nodded as he spoke, while Adept Xu and the others walked over as well. The wood golem said, quite obediently, “Per the orders of my master, Nong Zidao, I am here awaiting the arrival of disciples of Snowdragon Mountain. I am here to let you all know that my master, Nong Zidao, along with Jadechild, eighteen other Zifu Disciples, and two Zifu-level spirit-beasts have all entered the grand formation.”

“Do you have any other information?” Adept Xu Li asked.

“I know nothing else.” The wood golem shook its head.

“Has anyone emerged?” Adept Xu Li frowned as he spoke. “Did you feel the ground shake?”

The wood golem said, “Nobody has emerged. Prior to this, I felt the ground shake multiple times, but now, I don’t feel the ground shaking whatsoever.”

The faces of Adept Xu Li and the rest of the eight all changed. Some formations were able to completely block out sound, but it was extremely hard to block out the vibrations created from a battle, which would pass through the earth and the mud to the outside world. It was unheard of, at least, for Mortal-ranked formations to be able to block out ground vibrations.

“The first few ground vibrations indicate that they battled multiple times. But for there to be no further vibrations at all...and given that based on the information we received, the life-tablets of many Zifu Disciples, including Dong Ziqi, are shattered...” Adept Xu Li said in a soft voice, “The most likely possibility is that all of them are dead.”

“Adept, what should we do?” The others all looked towards Adept Xu Li.

Of the seven, some had run into Adept Xu Li on the road, while others had been waiting at Snowdragon City.

Prior to this, nineteen Zifu Disciples and two Zifu-level spirit-beasts had silently, soundlessly disappeared within this formation.

“We can’t enter it casually.” Adept Xu Li said in a soft voice. “Nong Zidao is extremely skilled in formations. Even I am inferior to him. As for

Jadechild, he has a divine ability and thus astonishingly great combat power, as well as tremendously strong life force as a Fiendgod Body Refiner...the two of them joined forces to enter, and yet there is no word of them. No matter what, we cannot enter the formation casually.”

The other seven all nodded in agreement.

“Let me try to forcibly break the formation first and see if I can destroy it.” Adept Xu Li glanced at the distant Oxhorn Mountain. He waved his hand, and a large seal appeared within his palm. This large seal flew out from his palm, then rapidly increased in size, quickly becoming an enormous seal that was more than three hundred meters long. It hung there, high above Oxhorn Mountain.

“Descend!”

Adept Xu Li pointed into the distance.

Instantly, the surrounding world seemed to change colors. The brilliant sunlight seemed to instantly disappear as the surrounding world turned pitch-black. Within the pitch-black skies, there were even many flashing stars, and amongst the stars there was an enormous, brilliant moon. Within the moon, a giant palm formed from moonlight emerged, which clasped that giant, three hundred meter seal.

And then, it smashed that seal downwards to the ground!

Bang!

It smashed directly atop the black fog surrounding the base of Oxhorn Mountain. The surrounding earth trembled violently, and then the giant moonlight hand lifted up again, raising the enormous seal once more.

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When Ninefire and the others saw the world itself change through the Manifestation, the looks on their faces changed as well. The brilliant light of the sun had been transformed into a constellation of stars in the night sky. They all called out in shock, “A Wanxiang Adept!”

“How could a Wanxiang Adept be here? The Swallow Mountain branch



of Snowdragon Mountain is nothing more than a branch. These branches only have Zifu Disciples. How could a Wanxiang Adept have come? Wanxiang Adepts are the core of Snowdragon Mountain. How could they have appeared here?” Truekeep stared, wide-eyed.

Every member of the Ji clan was completely shocked.

They didn’t dare believe it.

“Quick, everyone, go to your locations in your sub-formations.” Ninefire hurriedly ordered. “If that Wanxiang Adept thinks he can destroy our formation from outside just by using a giant seal, he is dreaming. At such a great distance...even a Wanxiang Adept is only able to at most unleash a tenth of his full power. Against power at this level, if we join forces and rely on the Netherwurm Heavenlock Formation, we can definitely fight back.”

“Should we call for Ji Ning?” Granny Shadow asked.

“No need. Landwurm, follow my orders and head towards the north.” Ninefire gave the order. “For now, you will temporarily serve as the center for the Dragontail Formation of our Netherwurm Heavenlock Formation.”

“Yes.” The azure-armored warrior replied.

Monsters initially trained in monstrous power, but upon establishing their Zifu, the body in their energy would also become the elemental energy of the Zifu. This Landwurm was at the peak Zifu-level...his elemental energy was even more powerful than Ji Ning’s!”

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“Descend!” From far away, Adept Xu Li pointed yet again.

The giant moonlight hand, clutching that great seal, once more smashed downwards towards Oxhorn Mountain. But this time, a draconic roar suddenly rang out, and an enormous black draconic tail swept out. The draconic tail was tremendous in size as well, and as it emerged from the black fog, it clashed directly against the downwards smashing seal.

Bang!

The giant seal smashed against the giant draconic tail. The draconic tail trembled slightly, but was able to hold on.

“A black draconic tail?” Adept Xu Li frowned. “And it’s actually able to block my Manifestation...”

There were limits to the distance at which an Immortal practitioner could use magic treasures to attack. The farther away they attacked from, the lower the power would be. Wanxiang Adepts could rely on their ‘Myriad Manifestations’ to launch long-distance attacks, but naturally, the power would be much lower than if they attacked in close-quarters combat. For example, when Adept Mu Xiao had wanted to prevent Bei Zishan from escaping, he had been able to, from an extremely great distance, generate his Manifestation to capture the bug-body of Bei Zishan.

“What formation is this?” Adept Xu Li frowned. “A few mere Zifu Disciples, by relying on this formation, are able to block my Manifestation. This formation...”

Despite his knowledge, even he wasn’t able to recognize this formation.

The seven nearby Zifu Disciples had looks of confusion and nervousness on their faces. That draconic tail that had emerged from the fog...what formation was this?

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Ninefire and the others, by relying on the Netherwurm created by the formation, had resisted the smashing blow of the giant seal. Still, they felt that doing so was quite an onerous task.

“I wonder how Ji Ning’s training is progressing. He might be at a critical moment.” Ninefire, frantic, wanted to summon Ning, but he was also worried that he would disrupt Ning’s meditations.

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Within the formation. Dark energy was flowing everywhere.

Ning sat there in the lotus position, completely absorbed in the intricate

mysteries of Yin and Yang transforming. He continuously experimented, gaining a greater and greater comprehension, having reached a level of completely losing himself in his training. He didn't even notice the tremors caused earlier by the giant seal smashing against the ground. As for Ninefire and the others, the giant Netherwurm they were controlling was in the area surrounding Ning, protecting him.

“Yin cannot be without Yang.”

“Yang cannot be without Yin.”

“Even the most powerful of dragons has regrets. After every peak, there is a valley...”

“Only when Yin and Yang transform into each other can they endlessly engender each other in a cycle.” Ning suddenly understood.

The Divine Sun Tattoo and the Divine Moon Tattoo on his back suddenly lit up. He could sense, from an unfathomably distance, separated by untold numbers of planes, those two giant stars. The Lunar Star and the Solar Star. They each immediately sent down surges of True Lunar Water and True Solar Fire, which pierced through countless planes and countless voids, descending directly upon Ning.

“Rumble...” “Rumble...” The surrounding area instantly became transformed into a world of fire and water.

Enormous petals of fire and water transformed into the bud of a flower, completely covering Ning within. With the True Lunar Water and True Solar Fire as the core, a tremendous amount of fire and water appeared, forming a gigantic flower that completely surrounded Ning, who was now like the stamen within the flower.

Even the distant Adept Xu Li and his group of Zifu Disciples could see, from far away, an enormous flower emerge from within the dark fog, as the tips of the petals just barely stretched out above the black fog.

# Chapter 22: Earth-Rank Magic Treasure

“What is that?” The seven Zifu Disciples of Snowdragon Mountain stared in amazement at the tips of the flower petals, which stretched out just beyond the distant black fog. Just from the tips of the petals alone, they could imagine how enormous the entire flower was.

“What is the Ji clan doing?”

“Adept Xu, the Ji clan...” The Zifu Disciples all looked at Adept Xu Li, who frowned and replied, “It should be an enormous flower, with the petals either a fiery red color or a watery blue color. It should be formed from fire and water.”

They weren’t able to reach much of a conclusion from this distance, just by staring at the tips of the flower emerging from the black fog.

“Let me try something.” Adept Xu pointed into the distance. “Descend!”

That giant moonlight hand once more emerged from the brilliant moon that hung in the pitch-black sky. It seized the huge, three hundred meter long seal and smashed downwards towards the petal. Immediately, a dragon’s body emerged from the black fog, receiving the blow from the great seal. With a boom...the black draconic form trembled, but managed to withstand the blow.

“Hmph. They are hiding in a formation. In close quarters, I would be able to crumble that draconic body with a single seal-blow.” Adept Xu shook his head.

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Within the formation.

Ji Ninefire was extremely nervous. He sent mentally, “Ji Ning is currently at the most critical moment of his training. That Wanxiang Adept wants to attack by using his Manifestations. No matter what, we must stop him!”

As for Ji Truekeep, Granny Shadow, and the others, they all understood that Ning was the future hope for their Ji clan. How could they permit anyone to disturb Ning’s training?

“He formed a flower of fire and water...what is Ji Ning doing?” Although Ninefire could sense that flower, he was still puzzled. This was because Ning already had the Fire-Water Lotus technique. Was Ning currently gaining insights into the Dao? Or was he training in his techniques?

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An enormous flower of fire and water, more than three hundred meters tall, completely enveloped Ning.

The core of it was formed from True Lunar Water and True Solar Fire, which activated and summoned a large amount of solar power and lunar power, flooding Ning’s body with it. Under the guidance of Ning’s divine tattoos, it caused Ning’s divine body to naturally, slowly evolve. Every single tendon, muscle, bone...even every single cell of every organ was wildly devouring this power.

[Scarlet Diagram of the Nine Shining Heavens]. Generally speaking, in order to advance by a stage, one slowly accumulated power, and then broke through. For example, from the fourth to the fifth stage, or from the fifth to the sixth stage, one had to slowly train and accumulate strength.

But from the sixth stage to the seventh stage was a giant leap between different realms!

The divine body would change on a qualitative level, and so the amount of energy that was needed was incomparably astonishing. In fact, the amount needed was even more astonishingly tremendous than the amount which Ning had acquired over the course of nearly five years, as he advanced from the fourth stage to the sixth stage. This was the most difficult-to-train Fiendgod Body Refining technique. Ning had even developed his own ‘Rainwater Sword Domain’ by now, and yet only today did he break through to the seventh stage!

The most difficult technique!

The most profound, mysterious technique!

But upon breakthrough through and advancing past this stage, one would receive assistance from the Solar Star and the Lunar Star, the two

exalted, supreme stars. They would send down their True Solar Fire and True Lunar Water to draw in enormous amounts of power, so as to allow the divine body to rapidly increase in strength.

“Whooosh!”

The enormous flower of water and fire became translucent, slowly opening and revealing the nude form of a youth, whose body was incomparably jewel-like and completely untarnished. It was Ning! A layer of fur clothing quickly appeared on Ning’s body, formed from his armor-type magic treasure.

A hint of a smile was on Ning’s face. He had finally passed into the seventh stage of the [Scarlet Diagram of the Nine Shining Heavens]. He could sense the surging divine power within his body, and the tremendous, endless lifeforce it contained. His body could be reborn from a single drop of blood.

“Finally, I can truly use divine abilities.” Ning revealed a look of joy.

A Fiendgod Body Refiner had to reach the Zifu level in order to unleash divine abilities.

The Windwing Evasion technique was more a matter of skill and technique, and so it could be used with just elemental Ki energy. Still, divine abilities were ‘divine’ abilities, and so only when using divine power to fuel them would they truly be divine, and truly unleash their full power. Previously, Ning was only at the peak Xiantian level as a Fiendgod Body Refiner, while his elemental Ki energy was beyond the peak Zifu-level within the formation. The difference was too great...which was why he had used his elemental Ki to perform the Windwing Evasion.

Now, however, although he had just reached the seventh stage, he had done so by using the number one Fiendgod Body Refining technique. Ning was no weaker than a normal late-stage Zifu Disciple Fiendgod Body Refiner.

“Compared to Jadechild,” Ning mused, “My current divine body is perhaps just a level weaker than his was.”

“He had the divine ability, ‘Heavenly Transformation’, while I have the divine ability, ‘Windwing Evasion.’”

“I also have my Rainwater Sword Domain, the Darknorth Swords...if we were to fight again, I would still be able to kill him, even if we were to fight head-on.” Ning was very confident in himself. The Windwing Evasion was a very different type of divine ability, compared to the Heavenly Transformation. Each had their own advantages; Heavenly Transformation was superlative in terms of power and speed, but lacking a bit in agility.

As for Windwing Evasion, it focused on both speed and agility!

“Ji Ning.” A voice rang out by his ears.

“Patriarch?” Ning revealed a smile.

“Hurry over.” Ninefire sent frantically. A corridor appeared in the black fog in front of Ning, and Ning transformed into a ray of light as he hurried through it.

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Patriarch Ninefire, Ishwin, and the Fairy Crane in the form of that white-robed maiden were all standing there.

“Patriarch.” When Ning emerged from the corridor within the black fog, he had a feeling that something was wrong. He saw that the Patriarch and his father didn’t look the slightest bit excited; instead, they had very somber looks on their faces.

“What is it?” Ning asked.

Ninefire said in a low voice, “I originally thought that after you killed that group of Zifu Disciples and Jadechild, that we would be able to survive this tribulation. But I didn’t expect...that Snowdragon Mountain would send yet another group of Zifu Disciples over, with a Wanxiang Adept amongst them.”

“Wanxiang Adept?” Ning was shocked. “How could there be a Wanxiang Adept? How could the Swallow Mountain branch of Snowdragon

Mountain have managed to invite a Wanxiang Adept to come in such a short period of time? Aren't we extremely far away from the main sect of Snowdragon Mountain?"

"I don't know." Ninefire shook his head.

Ishwin said solemnly as well, "No matter what, this Wanxiang Adept has already arrived. His power is quite terrifying. Earlier, he used his Manifestation to attack with a giant seal. By relying on the Netherwyrms Heavenlock Formation, we were just barely able to withstand it."

Ning's face grew solemn as well.

A Manifestation? One which the Netherwyrms Heavenlock Formation was just barely able to resist?

"That Wanxiang Adept should be named Xu Li." The nearby white-robed maiden suddenly said.

"Eh?" Ning, Ninefire, and Ishwin all looked towards the Fairy Crane.

The white-robed maiden said, "I followed Nong Zidao for many years, and once encountered this Xu Li. Adept Xu Li is a formidable figure in Snowdragon Mountain; he's not someone who Jadechild could be compared to. Jadechild's status in Snowdragon Mountain was quite ordinary, and even by using his divine ability, he was only on the same level as an early Wanxiang Adept."

"Adept Xu Li became a Wanxiang Adept more than sixty years ago." The white-robed maiden said. "He is a Ki Refiner, and the technique he trains in is definitely one of the best techniques available to Snowdragon Mountain. Although his training speed is slow, his elemental Ki is extremely pure. After sixty years, he must at least be at the middle stage for Wanxiang Adepts."

"In addition, as a Wanxiang Adept of Snowdragon Mountain, he definitely has an Earth-ranked magic treasure! There is a qualitative difference between Mortal-ranked magic treasures and Earth-ranked magic treasures...the difference in power is tremendous as well. In addition, his comprehension of the Dao is definitely far above that of



Jadechild's as well. Although Jadechild had a divine ability, there was no way for him to use an Earth-ranked magic treasure. This is a fundamental difference between him and Adept Xu. If Adept Xu wished to kill Jadechild, it would be simplicity itself."

After speaking, the white-robed maiden no longer spoke.

Ninefire and Ishwin exchanged glances. Earlier, when they were in a state of panic, the white-robed maiden hadn't said a word. Once Ning appeared, however, the white-robed maiden had provided some information regarding Adept Xu. Clearly, this white-robed maiden felt rather subservient towards Ning, rather than towards the Ji clan as a whole.

"At least at the middle-stage Wanxiang Adept level? An Earth-ranked magic treasure? Insights into the Dao?" Ning pondered. He wasn't a foolish child who understood nothing. After having seen so many magic treasures in the aquatic estate, Ning knew very well that the difference in power between magic treasures at different levels was tremendous.

There was a fundamental difference in power between an Earth-ranked magic treasure and a Mortal-ranked magic treasure.

As the maiden had said, if Adept Xu wanted to kill Jadechild, it would be simple!

"Ji Ning." Ninefire's face was red with worry. He said frantically, "We have never before fought against a Wanxiang Adept; we've only heard legends of battling them. Wanxiang Adepts definitely vastly outstrip Zifu Disciples in power. Wanxiang Adepts are able to kill Zifu Disciples as easily as we kill Xiantian lifeforms. Earth-ranked magic treasures...we've only heard of them, but have never experienced their power first-hand. You absolutely must not be careless. You hold the official writ to our City of Ten Thousand Swords, and also have the Traceless Talisman. Remember. If the situation begins to turn grim, immediately flee!"

Ning was stunned.

Flee?

“As long as you escape, the Ji clan will definitely rise again, and to even greater heights.” Ninefire instructed.

Ning had a restless feeling. He could vaguely sense danger looming. His soul was so powerful that generally speaking, when encountering danger, he would feel a vague, warning sense.

“Wanxiang Adept?” Ning didn’t have any experience fighting one either.

“Remember. You are not to risk yourself.” Ninefire looked at Ning, and Ishwin looked at his son with worry as well.

“I understand.” Ning nodded gently. “This Wanxiang Adept...I will definitely be very careful. If anything goes wrong, I will immediately flee.”

“Right.” Ninefire nodded.

.....

Outside the formation.

The Immortal practitioners of Snowdragon Mountain stared towards the distant Oxhorn Mountain, shrouded in black fog. The tips of the flower petals had disappeared by now.

“Adept Xu, what should we do?”

“Are we just to wait and watch here?” The Zifu Disciples all looked towards Adept Xu, waiting for his orders.

Adept Xu stared into the distance, a cold look in his eyes. He said a single, cold word. “Wait!”

Both Jadechild and Nong Zidao had failed. Although there was a huge difference in power between him and them, he still had to be cautious. He knew very well that this formation was extremely strange. Even though he was very powerful, he couldn’t enter recklessly. At worst...they could just give up this elemental ore mine.

“Master-uncle Xu, master-uncle Xu.” A distant ray of light shot towards them.

Xu Li lifted his head to take a look.

There was a fur-clad man, riding atop that streak of light.

“Apprentice-nephew Zidao.” A look of surprised delight appeared on Xu Li’s face. He hurriedly went forward to greet him. Out of all the people who had entered the formation, Nong Zidao was the one which Xu Li cared about the most. Nong Zidao was also an expert in formations, and had experience with this one. He was precisely what Xu Li needed the most right now.

“Master-uncle Xu.” Nong Zidao said hurriedly. “I was afraid that you had already entered the formation. Fortunately, you didn’t.”

“What?” Xu Li frowned as he looked at Nong Zidao. “Is this formation truly so terrifying?”

# Chapter 23: Sealing

Nong Zidao said hurriedly, “This grand formation is known as the Netherwurm Heavenlock Formation. This is a legendary formation. Although the Ji clan only has the simplified, Mortal-rank version of the formation, this is definitely one of the most supreme formations at the Mortal-rank. The power of this technique cannot be underestimated; it is no lower than some Earth-rank formations. If, master-uncle Xu, you were to enter it, you would be trapped within. Fortunately, you didn’t enter...”

“It is that amazing?” Adept Xu was startled.

A supreme Mortal-rank formation that was no weaker than some Earth-rank formations? Adept Xu knew very well that the value of such a formation was probably no lower than that magic treasure of his, the giant seal he was holding.

“Senior apprentice-brother Zidao, then what should we do?”

“Just watch as the Ji clan continues to delay?”

The Zifu Disciples all began to ask questions, worried. Nong Zidao said, “If I hadn’t already entered, I wouldn’t know either. However, since I’ve already spent quite some time within the Netherwurm Heavenlock Formation, I’ve spent a good amount of time analyzing it, and have gained certain insights. Right...let’s not be impatient. Let me first break the black fog formation.”

Nong Zidao immediately walked forward, with Adept Xu right behind him. Adept Xu viewed Nong Zidao as being the most useful of this group of Zifu Disciples. He was a formations expert...naturally, he had to ensure Nong Zidao’s safety.

“The black fog bewildering formation is an ordinary formation.” Nong Zidao laughed. “Prior to this, when I entered it, I was about to break it, but just as I was going to break it, I was trapped by the Netherwurm Heavenlock Formation.”

“Right.”

Nong Zidao looked carefully at the black fog surrounding the entire Oxhorn Mountain. “If my predictions are correct, one of the formation flags should be three hundred meters in that direction.” As he spoke, a flywhisk appeared in his hands. He swept it out, and its three thousand white strands immediately shot out, swirling towards the distance at high speed.

Swoosh!

Instantly, a formation flag was uprooted, and the black fog that had been covering the entire Oxhorn Mountain dissipated. Sunlight shone down upon Oxhorn Mountain, revealing an enormous black dragon that was currently coiled around it. The enormous body of the black dragon emanated a faint, dark, netherworldly aura, but the area the aura reached out to was far smaller than the area previously covered by the black fog bewildering formation.

.....

Atop Oxhorn Mountain.

Ning, Ninefire, and the others all had solemn looks on their faces. As soon as they saw Nong Zidao appear, they knew that the situation had just turned grim! They hadn’t expected that Nong Zidao, who had clearly fled, would appear once more. Nong Zidao had entered the formation and had a great deal of experience with it. And now, he easily defeated their black fog bewildering formation from outside.

“Why has Nong Zidao returned?” Ninefire’s eyes were filled with resentment and disbelief. “Without Nong Zidao present, even though this Adept Xu is powerful, as soon as he entered the Netherwurm Heavenlock Formation, he would be trapped within and unable to depart.”

“Nong Zidao!”

“How could things have ended up this way!” The members of the Ji clan were all frantic and grief-stricken.

Ning felt hatred in his heart as well. Nong Zidao’s arrival was akin to making Adept Xu a tiger with wings.

.....

Nong Zidao and Adept Xu stared at the Netherwurm, coiling about atop the distant Oxhorn Mountain.

“That enormous black dragon is the ‘Netherwurm’ formed by the Netherwurm Heavenlock Formation.” Nong Zidao said.

“Netherwurm.” Adept Xu stared at the giant black dragon coiling about Oxhorn Mountain, then nodded slightly.

Nong Zidao continued, “The Netherwurm Heavenlock Formation also has a secondary, bewildering effect. The ‘nether fog’ that emanates from it is also a type of bewildering formation. To break the entire Netherwurm Heavenlock Formation...it is too difficult. Even I don’t know how long it would take for me to break it.”

Adept Xu frowned. “Even you are unable to break it?”

“However, simply breaking the nether fog is much simpler. I’m able to do that.” Nong Zidao laughed. “Master-uncle, don’t be impatient. The Netherwurm and the nether fog are two separate parts. The Netherwurm is used to attack, while the nether fog is used to trap enemies. Although I’m unable to break the entire Netherwurm Heavenlock Formation, if you give me a bit of time and assist me, master-uncle, I am able to make the nether fog dissipate.”

Adept Xu said in surprised delight, “Make the nether fog disappear? Without the protection of the bewildering formation, if the Ji clan is to rely on the Netherwurm to fight head on against me, they will definitely perish.”

How could Adept Xu fear a few Zifu Disciples? The reason he didn’t dare enter earlier was because he wasn’t confident in being able to deal with the formations.

“The Netherwurm Heavenlock Formation has, in total, five component formations. The bewildering formation also has five components.” Nong Zidao said. “Previously, we entered the Dragonclaw Formation. I have already gained insight into some of the profound intricacies of the

Dragonclaw Formation. However, Jadechild wasn't strong enough...but with your power, master-uncle...as long as you use your Earth-ranked magic treasure, that giant seal, you will be able to disrupt the elemental pulse within the ground and dissipate the nether fog."

"Haha, excellent." Adept Xu was overjoyed.

Although he was an amateur, he still understood the principle of how formations relied on activating the power of the heavens and the earth...

If a formations expert had seen through the intricacies of the inner workings of a formation, then just by applying a few techniques to a few areas, the functioning of the entire formation could be disrupted! Nong Zidao wasn't able to destroy the Netherwurm, but he was able to disrupt the nether fog.

"Master-uncle." Nong Zidao laughed. "After I break through the nether fog, the Ji clan will be forced to face us head-on. The Ji clan is very weak; I'm afraid that they will immediately flee! Our ultimate goal is to gain the official writ for the City of Ten Thousand Swords, which they carry. If they are to escape, it will be very troublesome. And so, it is best if we first set down a grand sealing formation around Oxhorn Mountain."

Adept Xu, hearing this, nodded. "Your thoughts are meticulous."

"Swoosh!"

Adept Xu immediately transformed into a ray of light, flying about while setting up a grand formation around the entire base of Oxhorn Mountain.

"Rumble..."

A barrier of light, appearing like the ripples of clear water, suddenly sprang into being. The enormous barrier of light covered the entire Oxhorn Mountain, like a giant dome over it! Not just the air; even the ground was sealed off by the barrier of light.

The entire world had been sealed off!

This was a grand sealing formation...

Ning, Ninefire, and the others atop Oxhorn Mountain, upon seeing the

giant barrier of light appear out of nowhere, completely separating Oxhorn Mountain away from the outside world, all had exceedingly ugly looks on their faces.

“A grand sealing formation.” Ninefire said hoarsely. “In addition, Adept Xu personally established it. To break through this grand sealing formation....most likely, only someone with power equivalent to Adept Xu is capable of it.”

“Right.” Granny Shadow had a hint of despair in her eyes as well.

“We won’t be able to leave.” Truekeep said softly. “With our power, there is no way for us to break the sealing formation. There’s nowhere to run... so, let’s fight. Let’s have a fight with this Wanxiang Adept!”

Ishwin nodded as well. “Originally, I had thought that we had survived this tribulation. But a Wanxiang Adept has come! Our Ji clan should feel proud; we have forced a Wanxiang Adept to come deal with us.”

“Ji Ning, remember, if you have a bad feeling when fighting with Adept Xu, you must immediately leave.” Ninefire looked at Ning.

“You are the future hope of our Ji clan. Remember this.” Granny Shadow looked at Ning.

Truekeep and Ah Xing also looked towards Ning.

His father, Ishwin, gave him instructions as well. “Don’t do anything foolish.”

At this moment...

Ning could feel the despair his elders felt. When the grand sealing formation had appeared, it represented the fact that there was nowhere for the Ji clan to retreat to. Only he, who had the Traceless Talisman, was able to escape. There was no way for the others to escape.

“Right.” Ning nodded solemnly.

“Xu Li!” Ning looked downwards, staring through the nether fog towards the distant Adept Xu and Nong Zidao, his gaze filled with a killing intent. “A Wanxiang Adept? I want to see exactly how powerful a Wanxiang



Adept is.” Ning’s heart was now filled with a desire to kill this Wanxiang Adept, who posed a great threat to the Ji clan!

Kill! Kill! Kill!

.....

At the base of Oxhorn Mountain.

Adept Xu, Nong Zidao, and the others were all within the grand sealing barrier.

“There is another thing I must warn you of, master-uncle.” Nong Zidao said.

“Oh?” Adept Xu looked at him.

Nong Zidao continued, “The Ji clan only has a few Zifu Disciples, most of whom are not worthy of concern. There is only one person we must be careful of! He is the monstrous genius of the Ji clan, ‘Ji Ning’, who is only sixteen years old.”

“Sixteen? We have to be careful of him?” Adept Xu was shocked, and the other Zifu Disciples were incomparably surprised as well.

“Yes.” Nong Zidao said solemnly. “His power is quite terrifying. Earlier, nineteen of us Zifu Disciples entered, along with two Zifu-level spirit-beasts...actually, by relying on our own formation, we were able to fight against that Netherwurm. The Ji clan wasn’t able to harm us at all, but in the end, Ji Ning attacked. He was simply too strong.”

“All of our fellow disciples, including senior apprentice-brother Jadechild, died in Ji Ning’s hands.” Nong Zidao said.

“He is only sixteen! He killed Jadechild?” Adept Xu stared.

There was no monster like this in the entirety of Snowdragon Mountain!

The other Zifu Disciples were all dazed as well.

How could such a monstrous talent have appeared in a local clan like this Ji clan?

“You’ll know once you see him.” Nong Zidao said heavily. “Ji Ning dual-

trains as a Ki Refiner and as a Fiendgod Body Refiner. In addition, he is exceedingly skilled in swordplay, to the point of even having comprehended a 'Dao Domain'."

"Dao Domain!" Adept Xu's heart clenched, hard.

He, a mighty Wanxiang Adept, had yet to reach the 'Dao Domain' level in his insights regarding the Dao. The other Zifu Disciples were completely stupefied. Dao Domain? This was a concept that was too distant for them. Sixteen? A sixteen year old who gained a Dao Domain? This...was this real?

"His Dao Domain is a Rainwater Domain." Nong Zidao said. "Once the rain begins to fall, you must be careful. It represents that Ji Ning is about to attack at any moment."

"Right." Adept Xu nodded.

He felt that as a Wanxiang Adept with an Earth-ranked magic treasure and a high level of insight into the Dao...that he would absolutely be able to overcome this genius. However, the enemy did have a Dao Domain. This made it so that that he would definitely pay careful attention to this foe.

"Also. Prior to this, I had to rely on a Lesser Teleportation Dao-seal in order to flee." Nong Zidao said. "This Ji Ning of the Ji clan makes me uneasy. If he begins to battle with you, master-uncle...if they use some techniques against me, it will be very dangerous. Thus, master-uncle, I would like to borrow a Lesser Teleportation Dao-seal from you, so as to preserve my own life. Only then would I feel confident in entering the Netherwurm Heavenlock Formation once more and calmly investigate the nether fog, as well as how to disrupt the flow of elemental Ki."

Adept Xu hesitated for a moment.

Lesser Teleportation Dao-seal?

This sort of Dao-seal was a life-saving item and exceedingly precious. Although he was a Wanxiang Adept, the main sect had only bestowed upon him a single such Dao-seal. Afterwards, by trading some of his own

treasures, he acquired two more. Each Lesser Teleportation Dao-seal was exceedingly precious. But of course, if one encountered a particularly dangerous foe or a unique location, the Lesser Teleportation Dao-seal would be of no use either.

However, for battles at the normal Wanxiang Adept level, this Dao-seal was generally enough for one to flee.

“Fine. I will loan you one.” Adept Xu nodded. He understood that if he didn’t loan it to Nong Zidao, then Zidao, who had just avoided calamity, wouldn’t be willing to enter again.

After accepting the Lesser Teleportation Dao-seal, Nong Zidao instantly felt more confident, and he said with assuredness, “Master-uncle, please don’t worry. Ji Ning battled against Jadechild for quite some time, and was only able to kill Jadechild after exhausting his divine power. Master-uncle, when you go in person, you will definitely annihilate the entire Ji clan and acquire the official writ.”

“Excellent.” Adept Xu nodded and laughed.

“Come, let us enter together.” Adept Xu swept the other Zifu Disciples with his gaze.

The other seven Zifu Disciples glanced at each other, afraid to refuse. They all followed Adept Xu and Nong Zidao towards that distant, enormous Netherwurm, and the nether fog it emanated. Soon, all of them entered the region of nether fog.

# Chapter 24: Ji Ning Battles Myriad Manifestations!

As soon as Adept Xu, Nong Zidao, and the rest of the nine entered the Netherwurm Heavenlock Formation, Adept Xu barked, "Flood Dragon Formation!"

As soon as his words rang out, above the heads of Nong Zidao, Wu Qi, Lu Huang, and the other Zifu Disciples appeared the mirage of a Flood Dragon. The eight Flood Dragon mirages flew rapidly towards Adept Xu. Above him appeared an enormous Flood Dragon Phantom, which hovered there, waiting to join together with the other eight Flood Dragons.

As they joined together, instantly, a Flood Dragon with visible, snow-white scales appeared, circling around the nine.

Snowdragon Mountain was most famous for the 'Soaring Snowdragon Formation'. This was a grand formation that protected the entire sect. It could be led by a Primal Daoist, who would a group of Wanxiang Adepts and thousands of Zifu Disciples to form a massive formation that would transform into a white divine dragon, with the power to annihilate the heavens. The power was great enough to give Immortals a good fight!

Aside from this supreme 'Soaring Snowdragon Formation', it also had various simplified versions of the formation, all of which would be referred to as 'Flood Dragon Formations'.

All the simplified versions could only be referred to as creating a 'Flood Dragon'; only the supreme formation of the sect was referred to as creating a 'Snowdragon'. Adept Xu and the rest of the nine were currently using one of the simplified Flood Dragon Formations.

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The snowy white Flood Dragon swirled about them, emanating a powerful presence.

Adept Xu and the rest of the nine constantly advanced.

“Halt.” Nong Zidao ordered, while pointing to the front. “Master-uncle, please act. Make your grand seal transform to a length of thirty meters, and smash down at that mountain over there, lowering it by thirty meters.”

Adept Xu nodded. The grand seal flew out from his hand, which transformed to a large size, roughly thirty meters or so. Below the grand seal was a dense earthen yellow aura. He pointed downwards, and the grand seal, with a rumbling sound, crushed downwards, completely crumbling the trees and rocks beneath as he carved out a thirty meter deep crater.

“In this location, smash out another thirty meter deep crater.” Nong Zidao continued to walk forward while giving guidance.

Bang! Bang ! Bang! As the grand seal smashed down time and time again, one giant crater after another appeared, forming a strange diagram.

More than a hundred deep craters were created.

“Success.” Nong Zidao revealed a smile. Part of the elemental Ki that had been flowing through the earth had begun to change directions. Instantly, the nether fog around them began to rapidly dissipate, as the surrounding area once more became clear.

“Formidable.”

“Senior apprentice-brother Zidao is truly formidable.”

The various Zifu Disciples were all overjoyed. Everything around them was very clear now. Part of the entire Oxhorn Mountain was now revealed, and the trees and forests there could be clearly seen with the naked eye. Even the distant, gigantic black claws of the dragon could be seen. Immediately afterwards, the body of the coiling dragon atop Oxhorn Mountain suddenly began to move, and the location of the dragon claw changed as the claw moved to hide in a different part of the nether fog.

Nong Zidao laughed. “The nether fog of the Dragonclaw Formation has been dissipated. Now, only the Dragonpearl Formation, the Dragonhead Formation, the Dragontail Formation, and the Dragonbody Formation still

emanate that nether fog.”

“Which sub-formation shall we enter next?” Adept Xu already had a smile on his face.

“The reason why I was able to break the formation so quickly was because I already pondered on this formation for quite some time, previously.” Nong Zidao said. “As for the other four sub-formations...I imagine I will need a bit more time.”

Adept Xu said, worried, “How much longer?”

Nong Zidao let out a confident laugh. “Now that I have some experience from breaking the Dragonclaw Formation, the other four will be fast. I will need at most an hour for each of the others.”

“Excellent.” Adept Xu was instantly overjoyed.

At most an hour?

The remaining four formations, all combined, would only need four hours or so! As long as the nether fog was destroyed, there would be no place for the Ji clan to hide. They would have to fight head on...

“The Ji clan is doomed!” Adept Xu’s eyes were filled with anticipation. If they truly were to acquire this elemental ore mine, he would have rendered the most merits, and would naturally be granted great rewards.

“Let’s go!”

Adept Xu gave the order. The nine of them, surrounded by the protective snowy white Flood Dragon, entered the Dragonbody Formation.

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“The nether fog around the Dragonclaw Formation was broken!” Every member of the Ji clan was filled with dread.

It was the nether fog that allowed them to hold an advantage, in that they could fight when they wanted to, and flee when they wanted to! As for the enemy, they could only passively be attacked, and wouldn’t have any place to flee!

“We can’t let this continue.” Ji Ning, watching this, grew anxious. He understood the Netherwyrms Heavenlock Formation quite well, and also had a good grasp of formations in general. He hurriedly said, “The power of the Netherwyrms Heavenlock Formation is extremely great, and it also has an auxiliary nether fog effect. To break the entire Netherwyrms Heavenlock Formation is very hard, but it is comparatively easier to break through the bewildering nether fog formation. Nong Zidao...since he was able to break the Dragonclaw Formation’s fog, he will be able to break the others quite quickly as well, because they are all linked and similar.”

The controller of the formation, Ji Ninefire, nodded as well. “Right. We can’t just watch as they destroy the nether fog. We have to stop them.”

“We have to stop them.”

Frantic looks were on the faces of Granny Shadow and the others as well.

“Ji Ning, you’ll have to be the one to go.” Ninefire looked towards Ji Ning. “You are our only hope for stopping them. If even you are unable to stop them...then, the rest of us will have no choice but to try and delay, to try and hold on as long as possible.”

Ning nodded slightly. “Alright.”

This tribulation...it came in waves! After killing Jadechild, they had thought that they had won for sure, but then Adept Xu had arrived. This caused the Ji clan to once more face a terrifying danger.

“This battle...I must win.” Ning’s heart billowed with a boundless desire for battle.

He had to win!

He was the only one who could stop Snowdragon Mountain!

If even he were to fail, then he would be forced to flee, while his Patriarch, his father, and the others would remain trapped here by the grand sealing formation. They would only be able to rely on using their lives to battle for as long as possible.

“Xu Li, I will make sure you die!”

“All of you will die!”

Ning had only one thought – to kill his enemies. For the sake of survival. For the sake of the Ji clan. For the sake of his family. For the sake of not having to leave, grief-stricken, by himself.

He had to kill the enemy!

“Careful.” Ishwin looked at his son.

“Stopping them is important, but staying alive is more important.”  
Granny Shadow instructed in her hoarse voice.

All of them looked at Ning.

Ning nodded gently. Before him, a corridor in the black fog appeared. He dashed through it, moving like a blur at high speed towards the enemy.

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Moments later.

Ning stood next to an old, gnarled, crooked tree. The area around him was filled with a dense cluster of more than seven hundred flying swords, forty five of which were Mortal-ranked flying swords. After killing Jadechild’s group of Zifu Disciples, Ning’s collection of Mortal-ranked flying swords had increased to forty six, enough to create five formation bases.

“Rumble...” The flying swords around him all began to emit a blurry aura.

Ning frowned, sweat beginning to form on his forehead. He was struggling to control them, and the flying swords around him constantly rose and fell.

“No. I still can’t do it.” Ning shook his head. “Last time, when I fought Jadechild, I had twenty seven Mortal-ranked flying swords...I was only able to just barely use the ninth level of the [Lesser Thousand Swords Formation]. But now, I have forty five Mortal-ranked flying swords...no matter what I try, I’m unable to execute the ninth level of the [Lesser



Thousand Swords Formation].”

“Level eight, then!”

Ning gave it a try.

The flying swords around him all rose into the air, flashing with a white light, but it was still quite difficult.

“Arise!” Ning gritted his teeth. His head hurt to the point of splitting, but he was just able to manifest a flying sword, glowing with white light, in front of himself.

“Disperse.” With a thought, Ning collected the flying swords hovering about him.

Ning pondered to himself, “I am, at most, able to execute the eighth level of the [Lesser Thousand Swords Formation], and it is quite difficult. I imagine that executing three sword flashes using the eighth level of the [Lesser Thousand Swords Formation]...that is my limit.”

Although he was only able to activate the eighth level, in terms of power, the strength of his attack was 30%-40% greater than in the past, when he had used the ninth level of the [Lesser Thousand Swords Formation] to kill Jadechild.

“Patriarch, where are they?” Ning said. “I am prepared.”

“Right ahead of you. I will guide you.” Ninefire sent mentally.

“Alright.”

Ning wielded a pair of the Darknorth Swords in his hands, his eyes filled with a killing intent. He rapidly advanced forward.

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The snowy white Flood Dragon roved about, its draconic scales glistening with snowy white light. It was shockingly, breathtakingly beautiful. As for Adept Xu, Nong Zidao, and the others, they were protected and surrounded by the snowy white Flood Dragon. Nong Zidao was focused on analyzing the formation; he had to understand the intricate secrets of the nether fog generated by the Dragonbody

Formation.

Suddenly...

“Rustle...”

Within the nether fog, a drizzling rain suddenly appeared out of nowhere. The drizzling rain drifted downwards, cool and comfortable. This was an enjoyable, pleasurable drizzle, but the faces of the nine Immortal practitioners of Snowdragon Mountain all changed.

“Rainwater!”

“Rainwater! Ji Ning’s rainwater!”

“Rainwater Sword Domain. Ji Ning has unleashed his Rainwater Sword Domain. He is about to attack.” The Zifu Disciples were all extremely nervous. Even Nong Zidao temporarily paused his musings, a hint of concern on his face.

The descent of the rainwater was like a call from the Deathgod. The last time it came, Dong Ziqi, Jadechild, and the other Zifu Disciples had all perished. And now, the rain had come again.

“Rainwater Sword Domain?” Adept Xu, dressed in a beautiful black robe, swept the surrounding area with his gaze, his pupils contracting to slits, like that of a venomous viper. He was the calmest of the group, but he was still extremely cautious and wary. After all, he was still some distance away from being able to comprehend a Dao Domain.

“Hmph.” A cold snort rang out.

Within the nether fog, one dazzling star after another began to appear. Amongst the dazzling stars was a brilliant moon. The watery glow of the moon shone down upon Adept Xu and the other Zifu Disciples, covering the entire region of the snowy white Flood Dragon. The moonlight completely, forcibly blocked off the rainwater.

“Ji Ning, you lurk and sneak about. This really makes one look down on you.” Adept Xu stood there in the moonlight, the snowy white Flood Dragon swirling around him as he spoke in a cold voice. “If you want to

fight, then come and fight.”

“As you desire!”

A thunderous shout, like a spring thunderbolt, exploded forth.

Boom!

From far away, a bolt of light suddenly shot out from within the nether fog. A giant, fiery winged Roc suddenly surged forth, surrounded by a Fire-Water Lotus. In but an instant, the fiery Roc appeared before Adept Xu, moving so quickly as to astonish even him.

“Rumble...” The draconic tail of the snowy white Flood Dragon Phantom slapped towards the giant fiery Roc.

But the giant fiery Roc was simply too fast; the tail slap of the Flood Dragon actually missed!

“This is...” Adept Xu could instantly tell that this was no Roc; it was a youth! This youth’s entire body emanated a fiery light, like that of a Fiendgod’s, while on his back was a set of wings that fluttered agilely. The wing-type magic treasure was also covered with a fiery light, allowing him to move so quickly as to cause fear.

Divine ability – Windwing Evasion!

Once a Fiendgod Body Refiner learned a divine ability, he would be able to fight enemies of a higher power level. Although Ning was only at the seventh stage of the [Scarlet Diagram of the Nine Shining Heavens], he already had the combat ability of an ordinary late-stage Fiendgod Body Refiner. Now that he was also using the exquisitely agile divine ability, ‘Windwing Evasion’, his speed had instantly risen by several levels, to the point of being even faster than Adept Xu.

“Ji NIng?” Adept Xu’s face finally changed as he stared at this fur-clad youth, who wielded two swords, was bathed by the Scarlet Shine divine power, and who was so fast as to astonish even him. “He is Ji Ning? Supposedly on par with Jadechild? What sort of joke is this? Jadechild was nowhere near this strong!”

“Die!”

A fierce shout!

Sword light flashed!

# Chapter 25: 72 Flying Swords

Adept Xu stretched out his hand, and the giant seal suddenly expanded, sweeping towards Ji Ning like a gigantic rampart.

Swoosh! Swoosh!

Ning, bathed in fiery light, fluttered the wings on his back, sending himself arcing out in a line, dodging the grand seal and continuing to charge towards Adept Xu.

“Go.” Adept Xu controlled the giant seal, sending the giant seal, glowing that that earthen yellow light, to curve and turn towards Ning once more! The grand seal struck at Ning repeatedly; it was, after all, an Earth-ranked magic treasure, and so it moved in a straight line at tremendous speeds. Only, in terms of agility, it was significantly inferior to Ning.

Crackle!

Ning’s swords flashed, transforming into lines of rainwater that ‘scraped’ by the edges of the grand seal. The grand seal spun out of control to one side, while Ning once more swept out in an arc, charging straight towards Adept Xu.

“He’s too fast. His speed is too fast, and he’s too nimble.” Adept Xu was completely stunned. Just now, in that short period of time, his Earth-ranked magic treasure had clashed against Ning several times, but even his Earth-ranked magic treasure had been thrown off by Ning’s movement techniques.

“Go.”

Adept Xu let out a loud shout, and a black rope appeared in his hands. The black rope was covered with a layer of black energy, and as Adept Xu waved his hands, the black rope quickly expanded until it was the size of a giant python that was more than three hundred meters long, then swept entanglingly towards Ning.

Earth-ranked magic treasure, ‘Earth Garrison Seal’.

Earth-ranked magic treasure, ‘Black Serpent Cord’.

These were the two mighty Earth-ranked magic treasures which Adept Xu relied on as he roamed the world. One was hard, while the other was soft; the two paired together perfectly. Generally speaking, upon encountering those weaker than him, he would use the 'Earth Garrison Seal' to viciously smash them to death! Unexpectedly, he hadn't been able to smash Ning at all, and was forced to bring out the second of his two killing techniques.

"A cord?" Ning stared at the giant black cord, over three hundred meters in length, and his face changed slightly.

"This is troublesome. This giant seal moves in straight lines and isn't able to do anything to me, but that cord is perfectly suited for locking opponents." Many thoughts flashed through Ning's mind. "I definitely cannot permit myself to be constricted by that cord. Once it captures me, I will lose for sure."

In this battle, Ning had immediately used the Windwing Evasion at full power from the very start. He wanted to rely on his far superior speed and agility to kill his foe!

However...

Adept Xu stood there, unmoving; all he had done was unleash two powerful Earth-ranked magic treasures, and Ning already felt shaken.

"Water Rampart!"

"Fire-Water Lotus!" Ning, with a thought, instantly summoned one swirling curtain of water after another in the area around him. These curtains of water, as thin as the wing of a cicada, were all incomparably sharp. They directly chopped apart the moonlight barrier, forming multiple layers of watery curtains.

At the same time, in the air around him, one Fire-Water Lotus after another appeared and stabilized. A total of nine lotuses appeared, locked into various locations in the rainwater that perfectly entangled and blocked the rope.

"Hmph, with simple techniques like this, you wish to block my magic

treasure?” Adept Xu let out a cold laugh.

The Black Serpent Cord began to wildly wave about and dance. Bangbangbang! One curtain of water was forcibly shattered after the other. Whapwhapwhap! The Fire-Water Loti were also crushed to bits. How could these water curtains and Fire-Water Loti possibly block the power of an Earth-ranked magic treasure, when unleashed by a Wanxiang Adept?

But Ning didn't need to actually block them; what he needed to do was to slow down the speed of the cord, just a bit. Given his 'Windwing Evasion' divine ability, his speed would then naturally result in him moving beyond the cord.

“Swish!” “Swish!”

Rainwater filled the skies. Curtains of water swirled around him. Lotus petals of fire and water.

The Black Serpent Cord and the Earth Garrison Seal all strove to slay Ning...but Ning arced out in jagged lines, flashing about like a crooked bolt of lightning, charging straight towards Adept Xu.

“I want to see how many Earth-ranked magic treasures you have.” Ning swiped out with the Darknorth Swords in his hands, chopping straight towards Adept Xu.

.....

Nong Zidao and the others, watching from the side, were completely stupefied. They didn't even dare to breathe. They had no idea at all that this monstrous genius of the Ji clan would actually be able to fight head on against Adept Xu! Adept Xu had already activated two Earth-ranked magic treasures, but still hadn't been able to do anything to Ji Ning.

“Clearly...he clearly was just at Jadechild's level.” Nong Zidao couldn't believe what he was seeing. “How could Ji Ning's speed have suddenly risen by so much? Even two mighty Earth-ranked magic treasures, under the influence of his Rainwater Sword Domain and his Fire-Water Loti, are unable to touch him.”

His speed was simply too fast!

“If he had moved this fast in his earlier battle against Jadechild, Jadechild probably would have lost in their first exchange of blows.” Nong Zidao’s eyes were filled with disbelief. “Can it be that he just made some sort of a breakthrough?”

Monster.

What a monster!

“Adept Xu will definitely win.”

“Definitely win.”

Lu Huang and the other Zifu Adepts all prayed quietly. Once Adept Xu lost, Adept Xu could leave through his Lesser Teleportation Dao-seal, but they wouldn’t be able to escape.

.....

“Ji Ning will definitely win.” On the other side, Ji Ninefire and the others were praying as well.

“Ji Ning and Adept Xu are fighting to a standstill.” Ninefire, as the controller of the Netherwurm Heavenlock Formation, was able to watch this battle. As he did, he spoke with the nearby Ishwin. “Adept Xu is using two Earth-ranked magic treasures; his power is indeed exceedingly great. However, Ji Ning’s speed is astonishing; he’s simply inconceivably fast.”

As Ninefire spoke, Ishwin, by his side, was holding his breath.

He was nervous.

This was the critical battle!

.....

Seeing that even two Earth-ranked magic treasures hadn’t been enough to stop Ning, Adept Xu suddenly let out an explosive shout: “Formation!”

Whoosh! Whoosh! Whoosh! Whoosh! Whoosh! Whoosh!

In the air around him, seventy two flying swords suddenly appeared out of nowhere. Every single flying sword glowed with black light, and the



seventy two flying swords formed into a circle around Adept Xu, providing him with layers of protections.

“What?!” Ning, just about to display his swordplay and kill Adept Xu, stared in astonishment at the flying swords which had suddenly appeared in front of him. These flying swords all transformed into rays of flowing black light, stabbing straight towards him.

“Clang!” “Clang!” “Clang!” Ning wielded a Darknorth Sword in each hand, and in the blink of an eye, he used them to block nine attacks from flying swords. He was knocked flying backwards by the force of the collision, and from behind, the Black Serpent Cord and the Earth Garrison Seal came flying towards him once more.

The wings on Ning’s back trembled violently, and he immediately arced away, dodging the attacks.

The layers of Fire-Water Loti and curtains of rainwater around him continued to hinder everything.

“How could it be like this!” Ning’s face changed. He stared at the distant Adept Xu, securely protected by those seventy two flying swords.

“Seventy two flying swords, each of which strikes with power no weaker than a full-force attack from one of my Darknorth Swords.” Just now, Ning had attacked with full force. Although his swordplay was intricate, Adept Xu’s flying swords were still filled with middle-stage Wanxiang-level power, and in terms of technique, they were only slightly inferior.

Every single flying sword was indeed no less than a full-force blow from Ning’s Darknorth Swords.

“Hahaha...”

The distant Adept Xu began to laugh. “Ji Ning, I’ve already discovered your weakness. For me to use these two Earth-ranked treasures against you is using my weakness against your strength!”

“Although your speed is astonishing, you are still a Zifu Disciple. There’s no need for me to use Earth-ranked magic treasures; these Mortal-ranked flying swords are already enough to deal with you.” Adept Xu laughed. “In

addition, to deal with your fast speed, I should use large amounts of magic treasures to attack you in unison.”

“With many magic treasures at hand, I will just so happen to perfectly counter your speed.” Adept Xu laughed.

When fighting against different foes, naturally would had to use different measures. Adept Xu normally battled against other Wanxiang Adepts...and against them, the power of these flyings words would be considered too low. They would generally only be able to achieve victory through the use of Earth-ranked magic treasures. But against Ji Ning, these Mortal-ranked flying swords were enough to deal with him.

“Return.” Adept Xu laughed softly, and the giant seal and black cord that had been chasing after Ning returned to him, swirling about him.

“Go.” Adept Xu pointed towards the distance.

Swoosh!

Instantly, thirty six flying swords pierced through the skies, attacking Ji Ning.

Although those blossoms of Fire-Water Loti and layers of watery curtains strove to block the flying swords, the Mortal-ranked flying swords of Adept Xu were no weaker than the full-force blows of Jadechild. Naturally, these flying swords were able to peirce straight through, and although they slowed down a bit, they were simply too numerous. They surrounded Ning from every direction.

It was as though thirty six people were simultaneously attacking Ning.

“Against you, the path to victory is through sheer numbers.” Adept Xu was extremely confident.

.....

Ning, seeing the thirty six flying swords attack, had a dramatically changed look on his face. He hurriedly used his Windwing Evasion, urgently attempting to pull away from them. At the same time, six hundred-plus flying swords appeared out of nowhere in the area around

Ning.

“Go!” Ning had a savage look on his face, pouring almost all of his concentration into his sword-formation. For the moment, the surrounding layers of watery curtains and blossoms of Fire-Water Loti all vanished. He had completely focused his concentrating on executing the eighth level of the [Lesser Thousand Swords Formation], and there was nothing left for him to spare on controlling the Fire-Water Loti and the watery curtains.

Swish!

A ray of sword light suddenly transformed into a drop of rain, instantly howling and charging towards Adept Xu.

“Clang.” The distant Adept Xu, with but a thought, controlled the thirty six flying swords in pursuit of Ning to block that line of rainwater...

BOOM!

Three of the flying swords managed to intercept the line of rainwater, and the three flying swords were all blasted away, with that line of rainwater continuing to charge towards Adept Xu.

“Oh?” The distant Adept Xu revealed a smile. “It seems the power is quite formidable.”

“Go.” Nine of the thirty six flying swords protecting him instantly flew out. Clangclangclang! Repeated collision sounds...and the line of rainwater finally vanished.

Adept Xu stared at the distant Ning and laughed softly. “The power of this sword-formation technique of yours is indeed quite significant. However...it still isn’t at the power of my Earth-ranked magic treasures. Even if I just control these Mortal-ranked flying swords to block, I only need six flying swords in order to completely block the sword light generated by your sword-formation.”

“You are dead.” Adept Xu let out a confident laugh. “Die.”

The thirty six flying swords that had been by his side all flew out as well, joining together with the thirty six flying swords that were attacking Ning

already.

“Eight-By-Nine Sword Formation! Kill!” A hint of a fierce light flashed through Adept Xu’s eyes.

BANG!

The seventy two flying swords transformed into an enormous circular arc. Like an orderly army in a formation, all of the tips of the swords pointed towards Ji Ning.

# Chapter 26: A Disastrous Defeat

The curtains of water continued to rise up, and the Fire-Water Loti continued to bloom.

The seventy two flying swords, in the shape of a giant circular arc, pierced through the multiple curtains of water, pierced through the Fire-Water Loti, and stabbed towards Ning.

“Clang!” “Clang!” “Clang!” “Clang!” “Clang!” “Clang!”

One sound rang out after another. Ji Ning, the Darknorth Swords in his hands, hurriedly executed his swordplay, a curtain of water formed from sword light. Ning allowed those flying swords to attack as they pleased, focusing on defense and relying on his two swords to block those seventy two flying swords.

Whoosh!

A flying sword slashed past Ning’s thigh, sending blood flying.

Chop!

A flying sword pierced past Ning’s flank.

“Ning, quick, return, return.” The controller of the Netherwurm Heavenlock Formation, Patriarch Ji Ninefire, sent frantically.

“No.” Ning was unwilling.

“Quick. Your life is more important than ours. Stop fighting. Quick, return.” Ninefire’s voice was filled with urgency and pain.

Ning gritted his teeth, ignoring the Patriarch. He had to go all out and do his best, because...he truly didn’t want to fail.

He didn’t want to fail.

He didn’t want to see them die!

He didn’t want to!

.....

Adept Xu watched from afar, the look on his face having changed. “He

lives up to his reputation as someone who has gained insight into a Dao Domain. His swordplay truly is formidable. When defending, his defense can be described as airtight. Even though I'm occasionally able to wound him, it's under his control."

After all, the pressure of being attacked by seventy two flying swords was simply too great. Even Ning had to occasionally use his body parts or the magic wings on his back to block those flying swords...

"Kill!" Ning was struggling to block those seventy two flying swords, but suddenly, a fierce light flashed through his eyes.

Of the six hundred-plus flying swords hovering behind him, five hundred-plus suddenly lit up. A sword light began to form in front of Ning, emanating a fierce, sharp aura.

"Swish!" The sword light suddenly pierced through the skies.

This was the seventh level of the [Lesser Thousand Swords Formation]. Despite maintaining the Fire-Water Loti, the curtains of water, and executing his swordplay...Ning was simultaneously able to divide his mind enough to control the [Lesser Thousand Swords Formation], but only the seventh level of it.

"Kill, kill, kill!" Ning was in a berserk state. One sword flash after another appeared emerged, transforming into lines of rain and striking out.

"Kill him!" Ning's eyes were filled with both hope and terror. Terror from the deepest recesses of his heart; terror of being defeated! When the seventy two flying swords had attacked him, causing him to be unable to move closer to Adept Xu, Ning understood...that he would probably lose this time. His greatest advantage in battling Adept Xu was in his movements and agility!

But now, he couldn't even draw near his opponent. How could he win?

Was he about to lose?

If even he were defeated, then the Ji clan would be unable to stop the enemies. They would have to spend their lives to battle and stop them.

By then, his father, Ji Ishwin, along with Patriarch Ninefire, Granny Shadow...they would all give up their lives.

“Die, die, die!” Ning’s eyes were filled with a killing urge.

He had to go all out!

Go all out, one last time!

One flash of sword light after another transformed into lines of rain, striking towards Adept Xu.

Adept Xu just stood there, laughing coldly. “He really is relentless.” In the area around him, that black cord quickly looped around him multiple times. With the thick cord wrapped about him...the majority of the space was blocked off, and when the lines of rain struck at him, the black cord simply trembled slightly, then shattered the lines of rain.

Boom! Boom! Boom! The cords simply trembled and moved very slightly as they dispersed each attacking line of rain.

The power of this Earth-ranked magic treasure, ‘Black Serpent Cord’, was simply too great. It was able to easily disperse the blows of the [Lesser Thousand Swords Formation].

“Go.”

The remaining, final drop of rain struck out in a solitary arc, actually striking towards Nong Zidao, protected by multiple people.

“If I kill Nong Zidao, I still win!” Ning’s eyes were filled with savagery.

“Roaaaaar!”

That snowy white Flood Dragon gently descended over the bodies of Adept Xu, Nong Zidao, Lu Huang, and the rest of the nine Immortal practitioners. In but an instant...Adept Xu, Nong Zidao, and the others all entered the ‘body’ of the snowy white Flood Dragon.

It was much like how Ning and the others were within the body of the Netherwurm; Adept Xu and the others were also able to enter the body of their Flood Dragon.

“Bang!” The line of rainwater wildly pierced towards the snowy white Flood Dragon.

The draconic scales of the snowy white Flood Dragon trembled, but the line of rainwater was completely shattered.

Defeat.

“Hahaha.” Nong Zidao, within the body of the snowy white Flood Dragon, began to laugh. “This Flood Dragon Formation was jointly set up by master-uncle, myself, and seven others. Even if you had master-uncle’s level of power, it would still be hard for you to break through it. And your strength is far inferior to master-uncle’s.”

The Flood Dragon simply coiled there.

All of them were within the body of the Flood Dragon, with Adept Xu standing at the Flood Dragon’s head, staring at the distant Ning.

“Our Snowdragon Mountain’s famous ‘Soaring Snowdragon Formation’ is legendary in countless lands.” Adept Xu’s eyes were filled with arrogance. “Although this Flood Dragon Formation is merely a simplified version of the ‘Soaring Snowdragon Formation’, once it has been established with the nine of us within it...even I, using all my power, wouldn’t be able to do anything to this formation, much less you.”

.....

The distant Nong Zidao and Adept Xu spoke smugly. Although Ning was listening, in his heart, he was musing to himself.

“Can it be...can it be that I truly have been forced to take the last step?”

Swish!

Suddenly, a ripple of power surged close to him. Ning was in control of his Rainwater Sword Domain, and so although he couldn’t see anything visibly, he could sense a strange, needle-shaped item pierce towards him.

“Not good.” Ning immediately came to his senses. The magic wings behind his back trembled, and he immediately sought to use the Windwing Evasion to pull away from it. Although the Darknorth Swords



remained in his hands...they were currently being used to block the seventy two attacking flying swords. If he were to relax against them, the seventy two flying swords would chop his body into mincemeat.

Slash!

As Ning was frantically dodging, the sharp needle, as though consciously controlled, pierced straight through Ning's flank.

"Bang!"

The elemental Ki exploded!

Ning's incomparably tough Fiendgod body still had a giant hole blasted through it, even larger than the size of his head. The left part of his waist was completely shattered, leaving behind only a few scraps of muscle and flesh.

"Grow." While using the Windwing Evasion to hurriedly pull away, Ning also controlled his divine power to instantly cause new flesh and blood to grow out at high speed. The giant hole in his side was rapidly healing.

"Quick, come back." Ninefire howled furiously. "Ji Ning, if you don't come back, all of us will die with our eyes open and filled with resentment!!!"

He was frantic. Patriarch Ninefire was now truly frantic. He had asked Ning to come back earlier, but Ning insisted on struggling. If this continued...Ning would very likely perish.

Ning gritted his teeth in agony.

He would leave!

"Swoosh." His wings fluttered, and he instantly charged into the nearby nether fog. The nether fog was filled with darkness, and Adept Xu and the others only watched him enter, not daring to follow in.

"Ji NIng! You've already been struck by my Divine Blackblood Needle!" Adept Xu called out in a high voice. "I can already sense your location. Once you draw near me, forget about leaving with your life!"

.....

Halfway up Oxhorn Mountain.

One figure after another was making haste towards this location, moving like streaks of light. Ji Truekeep, Granny Shadow, and the others were all gathering here.

Swoosh

Ning arrived as well.

“Ji Ning.” Ninefire looked at the youth. It was this youth who had risked his life, time and time again. He let out a long sigh. “Ji Ning, our Ji clan has let you down.”

“Patriarch.” Ning’s eyes were red.

“You’ve done enough things. Done well enough.” Ninefire gently patted Ning on the shoulders. “In a slightly larger clan, a slightly more powerful clan...how could a supreme genius like yourself be forced to risk your life repeatedly like this? It is our Ji clan which has let you down. You killed Jadechild and that group of Zifu Disciples; you have done enough.”

“If we truly are not able to endure this, then it will simply be the will of the heavens, that our Ji clan is not to survive this tribulation.” Ninefire said softly. “There is no need to feel anger. No need to feel grief. All clans will have a time to flourish, and a time to fall. What we can do is to fight with all our power. That is enough. For the heavens to allow a genius like you to arrive within our Ji clan is already an incomparable kindness.”

Ninefire looked at Ning. “I know that with you alive, our Ji clan will definitely flourish. It definitely will!”

Ning gritted his teeth. His heart was shaking!

“Given how the situation has progressed...” Ninefire swept his gaze towards the nearby Granny Shadow, Ah Xing, Truekeep, and Ishwin, along with the Landwurm and the Fairy Crane. “Everyone, you should all know that the situation is very grim. There is also a giant sealing formation outside; there is nowhere for us to run.”

“This time, our only choice is to fight to the death!” Ninefire was very

calm, but his gaze was blazing.

“Fight to the death!”

Ishwin, Truekeep, and the others all had the same resolve in their eyes.

None of them would cower!

None of them were afraid!

If they were afraid, they wouldn't have come here, to Oxhorn Mountain.

“Obey my commands.” Ninefire said. “All of us must fight with full force, making it so that Nong Zidao is unable to completely concentrate on breaking the formation. We need to delay as much as we can. Thus, Landwurm, you will be the first to go and delay them. Once you die, the Fairy Crane will go!”

The Landwurm and the Fairy Crane, the two Zifu-level spirit-beasts, were in the form of the azure-armored man and the white-robed maiden. They glanced at each other, their eyes filled with bitterness.

“The two of you can only blame your poor luck. Fight at full power.” Ninefire said. “If you die in battle for the sake of our Ji clan, you can still enter the cycle of reincarnation. If you resist, then I will shatter your souls!”

“We will obey.”

The azure-armored warrior and the white-robed maiden both lowered their heads.

Once the soul-bond was set, they absolutely had to obey the orders of their owner. Otherwise, their owner could easily destroy their souls.

“After the Fairy Crane dies, Ishwin, you will go next.” Ninefire looked at Ishwin.

“Right.” Ishwin nodded.

He was only able to fight at the Zifu Disciple level for an hour. He was of the least use to the Netherwurm Heavenlock Formation; naturally, he would be the first member of the Ji clan to charge forward.

“Once Ishwin dies, Liu Xing, you go.” Ninefire looked towards the old servant, Ah Xing.

Ah Xing nodded.

“Once Liu Xing dies, Ji Shadow, you go.” Ninefire looked at his little sister.

Granny Shadow nodded.

“After Granny Shadow dies, Truekeep, you go.” Ninefire looked towards Truekeep. “I will immediately follow!”

Not a single voice was raised in dissent.

Ning, watching this, felt great pain in his heart. He hurriedly said, “Patriarch, I am the strongest, and I’m able to delay them as well. If I ambush them repeatedly...I can make it so that Nong Zidao is distracted and unable to focus on breaking the formation.”

“Didn’t you hear what Adept Xu just said?” Ninefire barked. “You were hit by his Divine Blackblood Needle. He can sense your location. Once you draw near him, he will definitely prepare a heavy counter-attack for you. It doesn’t matter if we die, but if you die, you would have let down the entire Ji clan, not just yourself, understood?”

Ning gritted his teeth.

“Ji Ning.” Granny Shadow said hoarsely. “If you dare to come again, I will immediately commit suicide in front of you.”

“Granny Shadow...” Ning’s heart trembled.

“Ji Ning.” Ishwin looked at his son, then gave him his instructions. “Don’t make our deaths meaningless.”

# Chapter 27: Ji Ning's Departure

Ji Ning nodded gently. "I won't go fight."

"Good." Ji Ninefire swept them with his gaze. "Everyone, return to your positions. Landwurm, for now, you will assume Ji Ning's position in the center of the Dragontail Formation. We will control the Netherwurm and attack!"

"Yes."

The Landwurm, Granny Shadow, Ah Xing, and Truekeep all immediately left to their own positions.

.....

The nether fog billowed.

A sinuous, coiling, snowy white Flood Dragon lay there, with Adept Xu and the others within the dragon's body, clearly quite cautious. Quite obviously, Ning's earlier prowess had caused Adept Xu to privately feel surprised. Still, the other Zifu Disciples were quite relaxed.

"Although Ji Ning is a monster, he's still just a Zifu Disciple. He's no match for the Adept."

"Compared to master-uncle, Ji Ning is far weaker."

"The Ji clan is doomed."

All of the Zifu Disciples chatted amongst each other in quite a relaxed manner.

As for Nong Zidao, his eyes were closed as he focused on analyzing the formation. Suddenly, amidst the distant, dense nether fog, a massive thunderclap could be heard!

"Whoosh!" An enormous draconic tail, covered with black draconic scales, came sweeping towards them.

Bang!

The sweeping attack landed on the coiled body of the snowy white Flood

Dragon, causing the entire dragon to be knocked backwards by the blow. Adept Xu, Nong Zidao, and the others, however, naturally remained within the dragon's body.

“Ambushed.”

“Yet another ambush.”

“Even Ji Ning lost. The Ji clan dares to ambush us again?” All of them were enraged. Given how even the Flood Dragon had been knocked flying, Nong Zidao, who had been focused on analyzing the formation, naturally was startled awake as well.

Adept Xu stood there at the draconic head of the snowy white Flood Dragon. He shouted loudly, “You are asking for death!”

Whoosh!

The grand seal in his hands suddenly flew into the air, rapidly expanding to a size of three hundred meters, smashing directly against that impudent, enormous draconic tail.

“Boom...” An enormous, explosive sound. Draconic scales blew apart, and the draconic tail itself was torn apart, with the dispersed energy quickly vanishing into the nether fog.

“Master-uncle.” Nong Zidao frowned as he stared towards the distant nether fog. “Even Ji Ning was no match for you, master-uncle. The Ji clan has already run out of options. Thus, all they are trying to do now is to waste time and impede me from breaking their formation.”

Adept Xu nodded. “Zidao, just focus on analyzing how to break the formation. Just now, I was caught offguard. Now that I am prepared, I definitely won't let the Ji clan's ambushes affect you.”

Whoosh.

Adept Xu waved his hand, and a black cord rapidly expanded to a length of hundreds of meters. It swirled around the snowy white Flood Dragon, while the grand seal returned to Adept Xu.

“As long as that Netherwyrms dares to appear, I will instantly shatter it.”

Adept Xu said.

Just moments later.

Whoosh!

A blur suddenly appeared. It was the draconic tail, once more striking.

“Boom...” The black cord suddenly lashed out. The whipping strike from an Earth-ranked magic treasure that a Wanxiang Adept was personally directing was enough to cause the draconic tail to instantly crumble.

Nong Zidao, within the snowy white Flood Dragon, finally let out a relieved sigh. He closed his eyes, once more focusing on analyzing the formation. The simple sounds and ruckuses of the outside battles didn't have much of an impact on him.

.....

Halfway up the mountain.

Ninefire, Ning, Ishwin, the Fairy Crane, and the Whitewater Hound were all present.

“Just relying on the Netherwyrms won't do.” Ninefire shook his head. “Adept Xu, by himself, is enough to cause the Netherwyrms to disperse. There's no way to impact Nong Zidao. We still have to rely on everyone going all out.”

The Netherwyrms were just an energy construct, after all. As for monsters and humans, they were living creatures; they could use certain tricks, such as releasing Dao-seals, etc...

“Landwyrms!”

Ninefire sent mentally. “Go!”

.....

The Landwyrms, in the shape of that azure-armored man, glanced at the corridor that had appeared in the nether fog before him. A hint of bitterness was in his eyes.

“Alas, alas...”

When he thought back to what he had experienced in his life, his heart was filled with grief.

Upon becoming tamed as a spirit-beast, one's only hope was to encounter a kind owner. Otherwise, life would be miserable. For example, after Jadechild died, he had been forced to submit yet again, and now he was being forced to go to his death.

But even though he was being sent to his death, he didn't dare to resist at all. This was because, if he died here, he would still go to the Netherworld Kingdom. Given the power of his soul, as a Zifu-level Greater Monster, he would definitely be a powerful ghost that would find it easy to join the army of ghosts. But if he were to resist...his soul would be destroyed.

"How hateful!"

The azure-armored man immediately transformed into his true form, an enormous, clawed Landwyrms. The enormous body of the Landwyrms moved across the mountain, rapidly passing through the corridor within the nether fog and moving towards Adept Xu.

Moments later.

The Landwyrms could vaguely see, through the corridor, the faint contours of a snowy white Flood Dragon, as well as the figures within the Flood Dragon's body.

"Swoosh!"

The Landwyrms suddenly flew forwards.

Whoosh!

He instantly charged forward. Nong Zidao was within the snowy white Flood Dragon, analyzing the formation. The other Zifu Disciples were staring at the surrounding areas, while Adept Xu was riding atop his magic treasure, prepared to attack at any moment.

"The Landwyrms."

"Landwyrms?"



The Zifu Disciples all immediately recognized it.

“Roaaaaaar!” The Landwurm charged forward, but before Adept Xu even had a chance to attack with his magic treasure, it raised its head, letting out a grieving, furious howl which shook the heavens.

And immediately afterwards, a terrifyingly powerful energy blast exploded forth from the body of the Landwurm, causing Adept Xu’s face to change.

“Careful!”

Rumble...

As a peak Zifu-level Godbeast, its Zifu lake was far vaster than the Zifu lake of a human Zifu-level practitioner. The amount of elemental Ki it contained was also boundless and deep. In terms of amount of elemental Ki, this Godbeast’s Zifu lake was not inferior to an early Wanxiang Adept’s.

All of the elemental Ki that it had accumulated over so many years suddenly exploded, causing an incomparably powerful blast to instantly ripped out, tearing the Landwurm’s body to pieces and wildly shooting in every direction.

“Block.” Adept Xu hurriedly controlled that grand seal to serve like a rampart, blocking in front of him.

Rumble...

The terrifying explosion blasted out in every direction, blowing aside that Earth-ranked magic treasure, ‘Earth Garrison Seal’. But after it sent the seal flying, the remaining amount that struck against the ‘body’ of the snowy white Flood Dragon was greatly reduced, causing the snowy white dragon to roll over a few times, but be completely undamaged.

“What’s going on?” Nong Zidao opened his eyes.

“Self-explosion.”

“It was a Landwurm which blew itself up.” The Zifu Disciples said.

Nong Zidao said, astonished, “Landwurm? That was senior apprentice-

brother Jadechild's Landwyrn."

Adept Xu's eyes narrowed as he stared at the enormous crater in the ground. HE said in a low voice, "This Landwyrn was a Godbeast amongst monsters. The amount of elemental Ki in its Zifu lake was incomparably vast. This self-detonation...truly was astonishingly powerful."

.....

Halfway up the mountain. Ninefire looked at the Fairy Crane, currently in the form of a white-robed maiden. "The Landwyrn is dead. Fairy Crane, your turn."

"Yes."

The Fairy Crane didn't hesitate at all, immediately departing towards the tunnel through the nether fog that had appeared in front of her.

But just a few moments after she had left...

BOOM!

A rumbling explosion which they seemed to be able to feel.

"That fast?" Ishwin frowned.

"She didn't go to Adept Xu." Ninefire growled. "That Fairy Crane...she was formerly the mount for Nong Zidao. Most likely, she had a deep relationship with Nong Zidao. I forced her to go blow herself up, and so she blew herself up midway, not disturbing Nong Zidao in the slightest."

Ning shook his head gently.

Upon accepting an owner...

In the spirit-beast's heart, it would naturally feel very obedient to it's owner. For the Fairy Crane to act in such a way was a testament to how deep the affection she bore for Nong Zidao was.

"Nong Zidao." Ninefire bellowed loudly. "Your former spirit-beast mount, the Fairy Crane. I ordered her to go attack you, but she actually blew herself up midway, before she had even reached out. It seems as though the relationship between you and the spirit-beast was quite close."

.....

His voice transmitted far away.

Adept Xu and the others all fell silent. They looked towards Nong Zidao, who opened his eyes, staring into the distance with a pained look.

“Crane...child...Crane...”

Previously, when he chose to flee, he had only a single Lesser Teleportation Dao-seal, and so he hadn’t taken his Fairy Crane.

He had released her from his bond, in the hopes that the Fairy Crane would be able to continue to live...but now, his Crane had actually blown herself up in the distance, for the sake of not disturbing him.

“Crane...”

“Crane.” Nong Zidao wanted to forget about her, but images from the past welled up, causing his mind to be unable to calm down.

“Apprentice-nephew Zidao.” Adept Xu barked. “This is a psychological ploy of the Ji clan. You cannot be affected by it. Hurry up and focus on breaking the formation; that’s what matters.”

Nong Zidao nodded. “Right.”

Although he understood this principle, how could he so easily discard and forget about the hundreds of years of friendship between him and the Fairy Crane? How could he truly calm down? The impact the Fairy Crane’s self-detonation had on him was far greater than the impact which Ji Ning had when he had attacked earlier.

.....

Halfway up Oxhorn Mountain.

Ning was incomparably nervous. He stared at his father. Based on the Patriarch’s original plan, after the Landwurm and the Fairy Crane perished, it would be his father who would go!

“The amount of time needed to brew a pot of tea has passed.” Ninefire suddenly said. “The Fairy Crane’s self-detonation had a major impact on Nong Zidao. But now that some time has passed, I imagine that Nong

Zidao has calmed down. Ishwin...your turn now.”

Ishwin nodded.

“You need to come up with a way to disturb Nong Zidao and prevent him from concentrating on analyzing of the formation.” Ninefire said. “The Landwyrm and the Fairy Crane were only recently tamed, after all; they weren’t fully loyal to our Ji clan. Thus, both of them were used to self-detonate, the simplest, fastest method to disturb the enemy. There was a limit to how long those two were able to delay. In the end, we mainly have to rely on our own people, of the Ji clan.”

“I know.” Ishwin nodded. “Leave it to me. But before this. Ji Ning!”

Ishwin looked at his son.

Ning raised his head, looking at his father.

“You can leave now.” Ishwin looked at his son, then said, “You are useless here. If you wait too long, more variables might come into place. Leave, now.”

“I should leave now?” Ning stared, wide-eyed. His father was about to go risk his life in battle. He was supposed to leave now?

“Go.” Ishwin barked.

Ning, looking at his father’s facial expressions, understood. His father, in his heart, had always been a proud, arrogant person. Even as he went to welcome death, he wouldn’t want to let his son see it.

“Ji Ning.” The nearby Ninefire understood Ishwin’s intent as well. He immediately said, “Go, hurry and go.”

The nearby Whitewater Hound walked over as well, raising its head and looking towards Ji Ning, eyes filled with longing and love.

“Uncle White.” Ning moved forward to embrace the Whitewater Hound.

This time...

The others, including Uncle White, were unable to leave. This was because there was a grand sealing formation outside! Only Ning would be

able to escape.

“Father. Uncle White.” Ning held Uncle White, looking at his father, his eyes filled with rare tears.

“Go!!!” Ishwin barked furiously.

Ning was in agony.

He didn’t want to go! He truly didn’t want to go!

He wanted to stay, to battle to the death by their sides!

“It takes courage to fight to the death.” Ninefire looked towards Ning.  
“But to choose to leave on one’s own requires even greater courage! Ji Ning...don’t disappoint us!”

The Whitewater Hound gently raised its head to look at Ning as well, also urging Ning to leave.

Ning looked at his father, looked at the Whitewater Hound, looked at his Patriarch...

“I’ll go!” Ning said hoarsely.

He turned and walked out through a corridor that had appeared through the nether fog.

In his heart, he was howling to himself that he truly didn’t want to leave. That he wanted to stay here with his father, with his Uncle White, and fight with them.

But his rationale mind told him that he had to go. Otherwise, the Patriarch and the others would all die with their eyes open, filled with resentment.

.....

The light of the sealing formation was everywhere, and it rippled like water, locking the entire region in.

“Break.”

“Break.”

Ning utilized his [Lesser Thousand Swords Formation] and his Darknorth Swords, but wasn't able to damage the sealing formation at all.

"Why. Why." Ning was howling in agony in his heart. If he was able to break this grand sealing formation, he would be able to lead his father, the Patriarch, and the Whitewater Hound in a retreat! But there was some distance between the Netherwurm Heavenlock Formation and this sealing formation; Ning was without the assistance of the Netherwurm Heavenlock Formation, and so the power of his [Lesser Thousand Swords Formation] immediately decreased to a lower level. He wouldn't even be able to fight against Jadechild right now.

Although the Darknorth Swords were somewhat more powerful, they were still far from being able to break through this grand sealing formation.

"Xu Li! Nong Zidao! Snowdragon Mountain!" Ning turned to look at the coiling Netherwurm, hidden within the vast, endless nether fog. "I, Ji Ning, swear that in my lifetime, I will eradicate you all!"

The Traceless Talisman appeared in Ji Ning's hands.

Whoosh.

The space around him rippled, and Ji Ning disappeared, having gone far away.

# Chapter 28: The Eight Great Divine Abilities of the Divine Abilities Hall

“Eh?” Adept Xu Li, standing within the draconic head of the snowy white Flood Dragon, frowned. The grand sealing formation was under his control, and thus, he could clearly sense...

“Someone is attacking my grand sealing formation from within? It seems as though someone from the Ji clan wishes to flee. Unfortunately, without the assistance of the Netherwyrms Heavenlock Formation, even Ji Ning, the most powerful of them, wouldn’t be able to break through the formation!”

“They need to just obediently wait for death.”

Adept Xu’s cold, insidious gaze held a hint of a killing intent.

Although he had used his Earth-ranked magic treasure, ‘Divine Blackblood Needle’, to wound Ning, in reality, he wasn’t able to sense Ning’s location at all. Previously, when he had loudly said that he could sense Ning’s location, he was completely bluffing! After all, he wouldn’t feel much pressure if other members of the Ji clan came and attacked, but an ambush from Ning put him under great pressure. He trusted that the Ji clan definitely treasured Ning, and so intentionally put on an act, shouting loudly...

And the effect was excellent. The elders of the Ji clan, no matter what, refused to let Ning go risk himself again.

.....

Serpentwing Lake. Within the icy waters of the lake.

Rustle...

Deep within the waters of the lake, space rippled and Ning appeared out of nowhere.

“This is...?” Ning looked at the boundless lakewater above him. He could sense the presence of the aquatic estate. “This is Serpentwing Lake?”

Previously, he had completely relied on a general sense and feeling to activate the Traceless Talisman to teleport him towards the general direction of Serpentwing Lake. Serpentwing Lake was a hundred kilometers in circumference, and so Ning's teleportation had resulted him being thrown deep into the waters of the lake.

"The aquatic estate. Inwards!" Ning willed it.

As long as he could sense the presence of the aquatic manor, he would be able to enter it.

The enormous phantom of a grizzly's head appeared in the lakewaters around him, swallowing Ning within its maw.

.....

Within the ancient aquatic estate. The enormous prayer mats lay scattered in the main hall. Everything was just as Ning had left it.

"Eh?" Ning appeared out of nowhere within the main hall. He immediately saw the old black bull and giant yellow bear in the distance.

"I can sense that you have already broken through, as a Fiendgod Body Refiner, to the 'Blood Drop Rebirth' level. Have you come to enter the Divine Abilities Hall?" The giant yellow bear looked at Ning, a hint of doubt suddenly appearing within its eyes. "Ji Ning, I can sense that your heart is filled with boundless rage, panic, and a murderous intent. What did you encounter, exactly?"

Ning's heart was still filled with concern for his father, Uncle White, the Patriarch, and the others on Oxhorn Mountain, who were at the brink of death. Upon hearing the words from the giant yellow bear, a light suddenly flashed in his mind!

Right!

The spirit of the aquatic estate!

The old black bull was the spirit of an Immortal-ranked magic treasure, while the giant yellow bear was even more unfathomable; it didn't even pay much attention to Immortal Juhua. In addition, the giant yellow bear



seemed to carry with it an aura of eternity, very similar to the eternal, unextinguishable aura that the image of Lady Nuwa which Ning visualized had.

This aquatic estate, even without his active control, could allow him to go through spatial teleportation? This sort of ability...was simply inconceivable.

“Senior.” Ning gave a brief explanation. “My Ji clan is currently facing a great tribulation. We face a powerful foe, roughly at the early Wanxiang Adept level of power, who has at least three Earth-ranked magic treasures! By relying on my Windwing Evasion, I was able to fight against him, but in the end, I was still defeated by him and forced to flee...senior, dare I ask, can you suggest any method by which I can defeat this Wanxiang Adept, and save my family?”

The giant yellow bear glanced at Ning. “Although you have the Windwing Evasion ability, that’s simply a very crude divine ability which has undergone a simplification process. It only allows your speed and agility to increase! Your actual power, however, is not increased...and so, your flaw is quite evident. If a Wanxiang Adept were to use a large number of magic treasures to attack you and limit your agility, you would definitely be defeated.”

Ning nodded. “Senior, your words are correct. But what should I do to defeat him? If I go to the Divine Abilities Hall and acquire a divine ability, would I be able to defeat that Wanxiang Adept?”

“The Divine Abilities Hall has many divine abilities.” The giant yellow bear said. “If you are able to learn a high-class divine ability, it would be simplicity itself for you to kill even a middle-stage Wanxiang Adept.”

A look of unconcealable excitement appeared on Ning’s face.

The panic and pain in his heart immediately became transformed into hope!

He had to acquire a divine ability!

And then, he would go save his father, Uncle White, the Patriarch, and

the others!

“I have reached the Blood Drop Rebirth level as a Fiendgod Body Refiner. I can acquire a Mortal-ranked magic treasure from the Treasures Pavilion.” Ning hurriedly said. “Senior, please let me choose. I will make a quick selection. I’ll choose a powerful magic treasure, so that I can go attempt the Divine Abilities Hall.”

The more powerful he was, the greater his chances would be in challenging the Divine Abilities Hall.

“No need.” The giant yellow bear shook its head. “The Divine Abilities Hall is a test for Fiendgods of later generations. It forbids one from using elemental Ki and any magic treasures! You have to use your power as a Fiendgod...and even your weapons will be provided to you by the Divine Abilities Hall.”

“I’m forbidden from using elemental Ki and magic treasures?” Ning hesitated slightly, but then he understood.

This was a test. A test of his abilities as a Fiendgod Body Refiner. It made sense that all Ki Refiner things were forbidden.

“You are only five years old.” The giant yellow bear looked at Ning. “You can wait until you are ten. By then, your power will be far greater. I imagine that if you go to the Divine Abilities Hall at that point, you will acquire even more powerful divine abilities. This Divine Abilities Hall is a place you will only be able to enter once. Are you sure you are going to enter now?”

“Yes.” Ning nodded. “I am going to enter the Divine Abilities Hall immediately.”

Perhaps, in five years, he would receive an even more powerful divine ability when he challenged the Divine Abilities Hall.

But his father, Uncle White, and the others wouldn’t be able to wait.

His father, by now, had most likely begun to execute a forbidden technique to delay Snowdragon Mountain. This was very possibly his father’s final hour of life.

“If I can return to Oxhorn Mountain within an hour, perhaps I will be able to save Father.” Ning was filled with hope.

He was fighting for every moment right now.

“Since you’ve decided, then come.” The giant yellow bear strode directly towards a nearby corridor, with Ning hurriedly following from behind. The nearby old black bull mumbled, “What a waste. If you waited five more years, you would definitely acquire an even more powerful divine ability from the Divine Abilities Hall.”

.....

The bronze door to the Divine Abilities Hall was shut. The surface of the door was covered with the carving of a single giant hand. The hand seemed to be omnipotent, as though it blocked out the skies and covered the earth, filled with boundless power.

The giant yellow bear only needed to take three steps to travel from the gate of the main hall to the gate of the Divine Abilities Hall. Upon arriving, as though it knew that Ning was currently very nervous, it turned to look at Ning, who was hurrying over like a flash of light.

“Follow me in.” The giant yellow bear said.

Rumble...

The bronze door opened. The insides of the hall were bathed with boundless amounts of gray light. When the gray light fell upon the giant yellow bear and Ning’s bodies, they disappeared without a trace.

“Rumble.” The door to the hall once more swung shut.

The old black bull remained outside the hall. The old black bull raised its head, staring at the gate, then sighed. “Given Ji Ning’s talents, he is even more of a monster than Immortal Juhua. In addition, he entered this aquatic estate at a very young age...his situation is much better than Immortal Juhua’s was. In the past, when Immortal Juhua entered the aquatic estate, he was far older than simply ten years. There was no way he could enter the Divine Abilities Hall at all.”

“If Immortal Juhua had the chance to challenge the Divine Abilities Hall and acquire a powerful divine ability, he probably wouldn’t have ended up becoming a Loose Immortal.” The old black bull sighed. “I wonder what sort of divine ability this Ji Ning will acquire.”

Not even the old black bull knew which divine abilities this Divine Abilities Hall contained.

.....

The blurry, gray area seemed to be an empty void.

Ning and the giant yellow bear appeared out of nowhere within this location. Ning looked around himself, but could see nothing at all.

“This can be said to be the most important part of the entire estate.” The giant yellow bear looked at Ning, then sighed. “I know that your family members are currently in mortal danger, but you only have a single chance to challenge this Divine Abilities Hall. I advise you, wait five more years. Five more years later, when you are more powerful, come and challenge this hall.”

“I’ve made my decision!” Ning said.

“Even the deaths of your family members aren’t as important as this opportunity.” The giant yellow bear said. “You still don’t understand what the divine abilities within this Divine Abilities Hall represent! This Divine Abilities Hall has seven mighty divine abilities; if you are able to acquire the most powerful of them, then in the future, you will even have the potential to dominate the Three Realms. By then, you can even locate your reincarnated family members. Even granting them their memories of their former lives won’t be too hard.”

The giant yellow bear looked at Ning, then said frantically, “Your talent is the best I have seen out of the successors to this estate, ever since Master created it. Don’t squander your talent. I can tell you this...the number one divine ability within the seven divine abilities of the Divine Abilities Hall was personally left here by Master.”

“The other six divine abilities were left behind by Master’s six mighty

disciples.”

“If you were to acquire Master’s divine ability...”

“In the future, you have a chance of escaping the Three Realms and becoming a Celestial Immortal, and perhaps even of dominating the Three Realms.” The giant yellow bear said frantically. “In the future, it wouldn’t even be difficult for you to erect an enormous dynasty like the Darcian Dynasty, which would exist for untold years.”

Ning, hearing this, was stunned.

At first, the giant yellow bear hadn’t paid him much attention, but ever since he had gained insight into the Rainwater Sword Domain, the giant yellow bear’s attitude towards him had markedly changed.

And now, the giant yellow bear clearly didn’t even want to let him waste this chance to challenge the Divine Abilities Hall.

“I wonder what the first master’s background was?” Ning asked.

“Countless years ago, after Pangu established the universe, but before the Three Realms of the Heaven, Netherworld, and the Mortal Realms were established, and before the three thousand great worlds, and countless lesser worlds were created...” The giant yellow bear looked at Ning. “...as far back as then, the first master had already left behind this estate, for the sake of ensuring that his divine abilities would be passed down. Although Master had six mighty disciples, none of them lived up to Master’s requirements, and thus they did not acquire that mighty divine ability.”

“After leaving down this estate, Master departed. To whence, I know not.”

“After his departure, countless years passed. The War of the Primordial Fiendgods. The birth of the three thousand major worlds and the trillions of lesser worlds...” The giant yellow bear looked towards Ning. “It was only due to luck and fate that this estate ended up in this world, one of the major worlds.”

The giant yellow bear said solemnly, “I can tell you this. Given your

power, you would at most be able to acquire the third divine ability. As for Master's divine ability, the chances of you acquiring it are less than one in ten thousand."

Ning was stunned.

He had guessed long ago that the first owner of the aquatic estate had an extraordinary history to him; he even had left quite a few 'Pure Yang' magic treasures in the Treasures Pavilion, which were above Immortal-ranked magic treasures in power. From this alone, one could tell how powerful the first master had been...but now, it seemed, this person was most likely an incredibly powerful figure of the Three Realms. The giant yellow bear's words were correct. There was only one chance to challenge the Divine Abilities Hall...and only a single chance to acquire such a powerful divine ability.

The giant yellow bear said, "If you miss this opportunity...you will most likely have to wait until you become a Celestial Immortal before you will have the chance to encounter such a powerful figure and gain another opportunity."

Ning hesitated slightly, then asked, "Senior, dare I ask, what sort of divine ability do I need to acquire in order to kill a middle-stage Wanxiang Adept?"

"Any of the top three will suffice."

The giant yellow bear said, "If you are able to acquire the most powerful divine ability which Master left behind, then given how you already have the power of an ordinary late-stage Zifu Disciple Fiendgod, you can use that powerful divine ability to annihilate a middle-stage Wanxiang Adept with a single technique. However, you don't even have a one-in-ten-thousand chance to acquire that divine ability, at your current level of power. Are you still going to make the attempt? This is your one and only chance to challenge the hall."

"I will." Ning didn't hesitate.

Perhaps, after five years, he would be able to acquire that powerful divine ability, resulting in his future accomplishments being so great that

he would be able to dominate the Three Realms, and even find his reincarnated parents and restore their previous memories to them.

But...

Even after his reincarnated parents received their memories back, would 'they' still truly be 'themselves'?

Once they were gone, they would be truly gone!

"Even if I'm not able to acquire that powerful divine ability, I, Ji Ning, can still dominate the Three Realms in the future. I am still planning on meeting with Judge Cui once more." Ning's eyes were filled with boundless determination. "What's more...who says I won't be able to acquire that powerful divine ability? The chance might be less than one in ten thousand, but that's still better than zero!"

"Alas! Once you miss this chance, it will be forever gone!" The giant yellow bear shook its head, then disappeared into the void.

Ning was left there by himself, with the empty, gray void.

# Chapter 29: Strongman

This gray, blurry space had nothing within it, but as Ji Ning stepped on and walked through the gray, misty space, it was as though he was stepping on solid ground.

“Where is the test of the Divine Abilities Hall?” Ning swept his gaze across the area. Suddenly, with a ‘whoosh’ sound, an enormous, pitch-black tablet landed on the ground before him, covered with a dense cluster of more than a hundred Fiendgod characters.

“Use your strength as a Fiendgod! Choose freely from the weapons next to you. Go forth and battle! Divine abilities are consummate skills meant for slaughter. The more strongmen you kill, the more powerful a divine ability you will require. If you kill too few, you might not even receive the seventh divine ability. The seven great divine abilities...they are right there. Kill as wildly as you can. In the instant when you collapse and your body is smashed, the test of the Divine Abilities Hall will conclude.”

He looked at the Fiendgod characters carved atop the giant tablet. Not too far away from the pitch-black tablet, an enormous table suddenly appeared, covered with a large number of weapons. There were hundreds of swords, hundreds of sabers, hundreds of spears, staffs...countless weapons lay densely clustered atop the table.

“So I really can choose as I please.” Ning was surprised by the number of weapons that had appeared. He didn’t dare hesitate at all.

Swish! Swish! He hurriedly picked up two longswords that were comparable to his Darknorth Swords.

“Eh?” Ning hesitated slightly. “Just using swordplay and the Rainwater Sword Domain won’t use up too much of my concentration.” Instantly, a large number of small, thin longswords flew up from the table. In total, nine flying swords flew out. The giant yellow bear had only said that for this trial, the participant was not permitted to use any Ki Refiner techniques. As for his divine will...this was the divine will that he had gained through possessing an incredibly powerful soul. Naturally, it



couldn't be considered a Ki Refiner technique.

"If I use my divine will to control these nine swords, although the power will be a bit weak, it will still serve in supporting me." Ning mused to himself.

This battle...he had to exert all of his strength within it, so as to acquire a more powerful divine ability. If he only received the sixth or seventh divine ability, even with it, he still probably would find it difficult to kill Adept Xu. The worst part of it was, neither the giant yellow bear nor the pitch-black tablet had informed him as to how many he had to kill to acquire the third divine ability or first divine ability.

.....

Immediately after Ning selected his swords, the gray mist in the void around him rapidly began to condense, forming one human-shaped figure after another.

"This is!" Ning's heart clenched. These human-shaped figures were all extremely muscular. They each had three savage eyes in their heads, and their entire bodies were virtually completely naked. The only thing they wore was something akin to a loincloth at their waists. All of their bodies bunched with muscles, and they held various weapons in their hands, such as axes, staffs, and warhammers.

Their breaths rang out like thunder, and their steps caused the earth to shake. Their bodies were filled with a sky-shaking, savage aura. And in an instant, the area around Ning became completely filled with hundreds of these human-shaped freaks.

"These are the 'strongmen' which the tablet spoke of?" Ning was startled. He had seen many books, and according to some of the legends recorded in the books, some of the great powers had 'strongmen' under their command. The so-called 'strongmen' were used to work as coolies to do physical labor. There were many different kinds of them, such as gateguard strongmen, cauldron-bearing strongmen, mountain-guarding strongmen, or even mountain-bearing strongmen and seastriding strongmen...

They had different missions, different names, and naturally different levels of power as well.

Strongmen, according to the legends, generally weren't living creatures. They were servants with simple intelligences that were created by some of the great powers. But of course, there were some powerful experts who would serve some of the great powers, and willingly take on the title of 'strongman'; this occurred as well. However, ordinary and extremely numerous strongmen such as these weren't actual living creatures.

"Kill!" "Kill!" The hundreds of savage, weapon-bearing strongmen rushed forward like the wind, charging towards Ning while running across the foggy 'ground'. They roared the Fiendgod word for 'kill', and their savage triple eyes were locked on Ning. They moved so quickly that in the blink of an eye, they arrived next to Ning, who was three hundred meters away.

"Die!" Rainwater slowly began to fall, encompassing an area of hundreds of square meters.

The rainwater instantly became as sharp as knives. Instantly, it was as though thousands of knives fell down and chopped towards those strongmen. The rainwater, carrying the profoundness of the Dao within them, contained astonishing power. The strongmen all let out savage howls, but were chopped into pieces, and then transformed into fog which once more dissipated into the heavens.

From far away, many strongmen continued to materialize, in even greater numbers than before.

"Kill!" Ning didn't hesitate at all. Controlling his rainwater, he began to attack those strongmen. The Rainwater Sword Domain was a Dao Domain, and was based off the insights he had gained into the Dao. As for the rainwater, it was formed from the energy of the world itself. These, too, could not be considered Ki Refiner techniques.

"Eh?" Ning's face changed slightly. "The strongmen are growing more powerful and becoming faster. Their bodies are growing sturdy as well. Even their axe and hammer techniques are increasing in power." It was clearly becoming a bit harder for him to kill them through his Rainwater

Sword Domain.

.....

This region of dreary gray space was producing strongmen nonstop. Ning, by relying on his Rainwater Sword Domain, was able to massacre them on a large scale, and so he was able to kill them quite quickly. In just the amount of time needed for five breaths, Ning was able to execute more than ten rounds of thousands of strongmen.

“Slashslashslash...”

The rainwater continued to chop down, leaving scars on the muscular bodies of the strongmen, but were unable to kill them now. “It’s no longer enough to rely on the Rainwater Sword Domain.” A fierce light flashed through Ning’s eyes. First, he condensed the nearby rainwater into swiveling petals of Fire-Water Loti, and using this enormous petals of fire and water, he began to wildly crush and grind down the strongmen. The strongmen relied on their weapons to block and to dodge, but in the end, some still perished.

Swish! Swish! Swish! Nine sword flashed pierced through the skies. These were the nine swords which Ning controlled through his divine will. Under Ning’s control, they all unleashed Ning’s most powerful sword attack...Rain Line! The reason why Ning had previously selected just nine swords was because he wanted to unleash his most powerful sword attacks. Ning’s divine will wasn’t able to control too many of them in doing so.

“Cutcutcut...” It was like chopping vegetables. The divine will controlled the swords at merely the early Zifu Adept stage of power, but under the power of the Rainwater Sword Domain...the strength of the blows was absolutely astonishing. Sword light flew everywhere, and many warriors were chopped into two halves and dissipated into mist.

By relying on his Rainwater Sword Domain, Fire-Water Loti, and swords controlled by divine will...Ning was able to slaughter the strongmen at an astonishing speed. The amount of time Ning had spent after using the Traceless Talisman to teleport to Serpentwing Lake, then entering the

underwater estate was actually quite low. The only place he spent a little extra time was in conversation with the giant yellow bear, but that was far from even being as much time as it took to boil a kettle of tea.

As Ning was engaging in a wild battle against the strongmen in the Divine Abilities Hall...

Oxhorn Mountain. Halfway up the mountain.

“Ishwin. You must be careful in this mission.” Ji Ninefire looked at Ji Ishwin. “Delay as much as you can. There are only five of us left, but we need to try to delay for nearly two days. Although you are ill, delay them as long as you can.”

“I understand.” Ishwin nodded. He looked at the Whitewater Hound by his side, who used its head to gently nudge Ishwin, clearly unwilling to part from him. “Little White.” Ishwin gently stroked the Whitewater Hound’s head.

Ishwin’s parents had died long ago. In his heart, the three who held the most paramount positions were his wife, his son, and his lifelong brother, ‘Little White’. The amount of time Little White had been by his side far surpassed the amount of time his wife and his son had been by his side. Only Little White had always accompanied him. They had adventured together...and even though death was in front of them, neither would retreat in the slightest.

“I’m going now.” Ishwin lowered his head and gently kissed the Whitewater Hound on the forehead. The Whitewater Hound’s eyes became moist. As for Ishwin, he turned his head and charged into a corridor that had just opened within the nether fog. The Whitewater Hound escorted Ishwin into the fog...he truly wished to accompany Ishwin, but as soon as Ishwin used his forbidden techniques, his power would immediately rise. In addition, with the support of the Netherwyrms Heavenlock Formation, his power would become truly astonishing. As for the Whitewater Hound, as he was merely a peak Xiantian spirit-beast, he would be nothing more than a burden.

He knew very well that he would only be a burden. That it would be

dangerous. He still wanted to go...because he knew that his most beloved, important elder brother, 'Ji Ishwin', was probably going to die. How could he not go?

"Whitewater Hound." Ninefire spoke out. The Whitewater Hound turned to look at Patriarch Ninefire. "My Ji clan has only five members remaining here; we will only just be able to maintain the Netherwyrms Heavenlock Formation." Ninefire said. "After Ishwin dies, only four will remain, and the Netherwyrms Heavenlock Formation will no longer be at peak power. I have here a portion of 'liquefied elemental essence' that you can use to try and make a breakthrough. If you are able to break through to become a Zifu-level Greater Monster, after Ishwin dies, you can take his place."

Because none of them would be able to escape from the grand sealing formation...even if they died, they had to make their deaths more spectacular.

"Woof." The Whitewater Hound nodded gently, then opened his mouth and accepted the jade flask. Originally, Ning had used up a third of the liquefied elemental essence, breaking through to the Zifu Disciple and establishing his Zifu as an early-stage Disciple! Ning didn't waste the remaining amount of liquefied elemental essence, leaving it behind for the Patriarch.

The Whitewater Hound's eyes were filled with hope. He wanted to breakthrough and help his master once again. Help his elder brother. The person he was closest to in the entire world.

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The underwater estate. Outside the Divine Abilities Hall. The old black bull and the giant yellow bear were present. "Alas!" The giant yellow bear sighed. "Big Brother, what is it?" The old black bull said hurriedly.

"It is as I expected." The giant yellow bear sighed. "I have waited here for countless years. This Ji Ning is the only person I have encountered who truly has a chance at acquiring the divine ability which Master left behind. His soul is so powerful that he is capable of using his divine will, and his understanding of the Dao is quite deep as well, at the Dao Domain realm.

By relying on his Rainwater Sword Domain and using divine will...he has been slaughtering and massacring countless strongmen. But now that the strongmen are growing more and more powerful, he is finding it more and more difficult. Even though he himself is also using two swords to battle, he still finds it quite difficult.”

“If he were to wait five more years...his [Scarlet Diagram of the Nine Shining Heavens] would probably reach the eighth or ninth stage. Given how quickly he gains insight into the Dao, in five years, he will have made astonishing improvements in this regard as well.”

“His divine body will be stronger, and his insights into the Dao greater. By then, he absolutely would be capable of acquiring the divine ability which Master left behind. What a pity, what a pity.” The giant yellow bear sighed.

“Then he...?” The old black bull said, worried. “His killing speed is quite fast. In the time it takes to brew tea, he killed tens of thousands of strongmen. But I can tell from his strength that it would be hard for him to obtain even the third divine ability.” The giant yellow bear shook his head. “As for the first divine ability, that’s unfathomably far away. What a pity, what a pity. If he waited five more years...”

“Yes...but he wasn’t willing to wait five more years.” The old black bull sighed as well.

# Chapter 30: Whitewater Hound Transforms

One strongman after another continued to condense from within the gray, misty void. These strongmen were all incomparably savage and fearless. Wielding their warhammers, spears, axes, and other weapons, they charged forth, bellowing that ancient Fiengod word for 'kill'.

The rain fell down like sheets of curtains. One layer of watery walls swirled through these strongmen. The 'rainwater' of the Rainwater Sword Domain was no longer capable of killing these strongmen. All Ji Ning could do with it was to use the rainwater to slow them down as much as possible.

"Slash!" "Chop!" "Pierce!" Nine sword flashes danced in the skies. Some strongmen died after their heads were pierced through. Others died through bisection. Still others died through decapitation...

"Die, all of you." Ning wielded two swords in his hands, executing his divine ability, 'Windwing Evasion', while on his back, a pair of wings created from the Scarlet Shine divine power had manifested. This was the true face of the Windwing Evasion! Originally, the Yuchi clan had wanted to hide the fact that their clan had a divine ability, and so they had ordered their descendants to always use wing-type magic treasures when executing the technique.

How could a true divine ability require the supporting help of a magic treasure?

"Swoosh!" Ning moved as fast a ghost, curving through the masses in a solitary line, and wherever he passed, the two swords in his hands accompanied him, transforming into two arcing sword flashes.

Slash! Two rows of strongmen were instantly chopped into two pieces. They died, and then dissipated into mist once more. "Kill." Ning swept out with his swords, and wherever he struck, strongmen fell and perished.

"Difficult. Starting to grow difficult." A hint of worry had appeared on Ji

Ning's face. "The Rainwater Sword Domain and the Fire-Water Loti are now unable to kill them. I have to rely on the nine swords that I am controlling through my divine will, and every single sword is only able to kill one of them at once."

At the very beginning, those nine swords controlled through divine sense were able to sweep through many strongmen at once. But now, clearly, every single sword had to focus on a single strongman. Only the two swords he personally wielded were capable of killing a row of enemies at once!

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Strongmen continued to die, but the gray, misty void continued to constantly generated even more strongmen. The newly born strongmen had even more savage auras, and wielded even greater might.

Chop! Chop! Chop! The nine flying swords left behind wounds on the bellowing strongmen, but they continued to charge towards Ning.

"It's finally come to this. This moment has finally come. These newly born strongmen can no longer be killed by the swords controlled through divine will alone." Ning gritted his teeth, transforming himself into a streak of light repeatedly, and his the swords in his hands howled out, chopping through swathes of strongmen. Only the sharp swords he personally wielded were able to kill these strongmen now.

After all, the power of the swords he controlled through divine will was merely at the early Zifu stage. But Ning's physical strength as a Fiendgod refiner was at the late Zifu level...he was two levels higher than he should have been at, thanks to the [Scarlet Diagram of the Nine Shining Heavens], and so it was only natural that the two sharp swords he personally wielded would be more powerful.

"Kill." Ning continued to kill with all his strength...and the giant yellow bear, outside of the Divine Abilities Hall, could see exactly what was going on within.

"These are his last death-struggles." The giant yellow bear sighed. "Ji Ning is about to admit defeat." "Admit defeat?" The old black bull asked.



“Will he be able to receive the third divine ability?”

The giant yellow bear shook his head. “He’s still a bit off. His current Rainwater Sword Domain and his divine will are now completely useless. He can only rely on the two swords in his hands to kill. His sword technique is exceptional, especially given the fact that his dual swords are able to reinforce each other...and thus, he will be able to hold on for a bit longer. However, it will be quite difficult and hard to say if he will successfully acquire the third divine ability.”

“Alas.” The old black bull was resigned as well. “Soon. He will come out soon.” The giant yellow bear shook his head. “What a pity. He truly did have a chance at acquiring Master’s divine ability.”

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Oxhorn Mountain. Halfway up the mountain.

Ji Ninefire could sense everything which was going on within the grand formation. He was currently focused on two things; the first was Ji Ishwin’s sneak attacks on the forces of Snowdragon Mountain, and the other was the Whitewater Hound’s breakthrough.

“Ishwin truly is wise.” Ninefire’s eyes held amusement within them, but there was a hint of grief hidden within the laughter. “His natural talent is far greater than Truekeep’s. In the past, when he went to roam the Darknorth Seas, he was already at the middle Zifu stage. If he hadn’t suffered that disaster on the way back, he probably would be close to the peak Zifu stage by now.”

If it hadn’t been for a monster like Ji Ning appearing, Ishwin would have definitely been acknowledged as the number one genius of the Ji clan.

“This battle will be the final battle of Ishwin’s life.” Ninefire watched, watched Ishwin’s final, most glorious moment. But suddenly...

A powerful, mysterious aura appeared nearby him, but soon, that aura then dissipated. “The Whitewater Hound!” A look of surprised joy appeared in Ninefire’s eyes. “He made a breakthrough? He made it?”

The Whitewater Hound was a Godbeast that was legendary for its

intelligence. Ishwin had mentioned before to Ninefire that this brother of his, the Whitewater Hound, was an extremely high level of comprehension, and had surpassed the Zifu level in that regard long ago. Only, as a Godbeast, the amount of energy that he needed to accumulate to break through was significant. Thus, Ninefire had given the jade bottle to the Whitewater Hound on a gamble. Who would've thought that he'd truly succeed?

"Coming." Ninefire turned his head to look. A white-robed man walked over. This man had a head of long, snowy white hair that fell to his waist. His face was strikingly similar to Ishwin's, but his eyes held a hint of kindness within them...if Ishwin was described as a glacier that had been existing for ten thousand years, then this man was like the spring wind that brought a sense of warmth.

"Whitewater Hound?" Ninefire looked at the white-robed man, calling out in surprise. Naturally, he knew that this man in front of him was the human transformation of the Godbeast 'Whitewater Hound'. Only, he was surprised at the Whitewater Hound's appearance. It must be understood that one's appearance stemmed from one's heart; the appearance which some Greater Monsters took on after transforming wasn't based purely on their own choice. Their appearance after transforming wasn't up to their control.

Everything was determined by their heart! Some monsters, in human form, would appear cold and sinister. Some would appear tyrannous and overbearing. Others would look ugly and crooked, while still others would be devilish and enchanting...everything was determined by their hearts.

"His appearance is striking similar to Ishwin's; those who didn't know him might take him to be Ishwin's sibling. From this, one can tell how important Ishwin is to him." Ninefire murmured to himself. "In addition, there isn't a hint of the foul, evil aura which usually emanates from foreheads of monsters. The opposite; he gives off a calm aura...he makes others feel as though they were facing the moist spring wind. It seems the Dao-heart of this Whitewater Hound is extraordinary.

This type of Godbeast, the Whitewater Hound, was legendary for its

wisdom, and was very kind-hearted. According to legend, they had a hint of the bloodline of the primordial Fiendgod, 'Whitemarsh'.

Godbeasts generally had their own unique innate divine abilities. For example, the Emerald Skysnake was capable of the Void Blink technique. As for the Whitewater Hound...although it didn't have any special innate abilities, its innate characteristics was its wisdom and kindness.

"Patriarch." The Whitewater Hound looked at Ninefire. "Whitewater Hound." Ninefire said. "Everyone says that Whitewater Hounds are incomparably wise. Our Ji clan currently faces a great disaster; do you have anything you can do?"

Although this type of Godbeast, Whitewater Hounds, were extremely common, very few were able to break through to the Zifu level. This was the first which Ninefire had ever seen.

"Upon being locked within this grand sealing formation, what could I possibly do?" The Whitewater Hound gently shook his head. "The only choice is to fight!"

Ninefire then asked, "What are you skilled in?" "I like to analyze formations." The Whitewater Hound said softly. "Elder Brother Ishwin, in the past, helped me collect some books on formations. Elder Sister Snow also gifted me with some books on formations. I normally focus on analyzing formations, and have gained significant insights into them."

Ninefire was a bit disappointed. Formation? The Ji clan had established the Netherwurm Heavenlock Formation; even if the Whitewater Hound was skilled in formations, what use would it be?

"I also have some unranked formation flags which I used in the past when developing formations." The Whitewater Hound said. "By using these formation flags and setting them up around Snowdragon Mountain's forces, I should be able to make the local elemental pulses and ley lines more complicated, making it harder for Nong Zidao to analyze and break through them."

"What!" Ninefire was shocked. "You...you are able to..." Ninefire was completely stunned. An amateur might not understand what the

Whitewater Hound's words meant, but Ninefire was a formations expert as well. It must be understood that different formations had different ways of activating the energy of the world; there were different levels and methods. For example, although the Netherwurm Heavenlock Formation and the bewildering black fog illusion formation were able to link together, when it came to time spent analyzing, the black bewildering fog formation wasn't able to do anything to Nong Zidao.

The two formations had different mechanisms for using the power of the world. Naturally, they wouldn't be able to impact each other. To impact each other...that meant one formation had to be able to guide the natural energy of the world in a way which was very similar to the nether fog's, to the point of becoming one. The difficulty of doing this was no less than breaking the nether fog formation itself!

"You?" Ninefire stared at the Whitewater Hound, stunned, then said with absolute excitement, "If you are able to do this, that will make the nether fog even more difficult to break. Perhaps we'll be able to delay for two days."

The Whitewater Hound's gaze turned distant. "Given the speed by which Nong Zidao defeated the nether energy surrounding the Dragonclaw Formation...even with my influence, we will be lucky if we are able to delay by two days."

"I have some additional formation flags here. Would you need them?" Ninefire hurriedly said. "I'm only using them to affect the local elemental energy ley lines, not to engage in battle. These unranked formation flags are sufficient." The Whitewater Hound said. "In addition, I've spent a long period of time practicing with these unranked formation flags. I am very familiar with them."

"Fine. Hurry and go." Ninefire said excitedly. The Whitewater Hound, in the shape of a man, walked towards a corridor that had appeared within the nether fog, and then his body turned into a mist which reformed into the Godbeast, Whitewater Hound. Generally speaking, monsters were more accustomed to their own, original form.

“Formidable, formidable.” Excitement was in Ninefire’s eyes. “Everyone says that Whitewater Hounds are Godbeasts legendary for their fame. Who would have imagined that they could reach such heights in analyzing formations as well...

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“Little White!” Ishwin was holding a Dao-seal in his hand, but he stared, astonished, as a snowy white hound appeared by his side. This snowy white hound quickly transformed into a white-robed, white-haired man.

“You broke through?” Ishwin was both surprised and delighted. He stared at the man who appeared so similar to him, and yet who had a softer, gentler aura. Ishwin felt a sense of closeness from deep in his heart...because this was his brother, his lifelong friend.

The Whitewater Hound looked at Ishwin, a hint of moisture in his eyes. “This will be the last battle that I shall undergo with you, Elder Brother. In this battle, we shall fight side by side.”

“Alright.” Ishwin slung his arm around the Whitewater Hound’s shoulders, unable to keep the tears from coming out of his eyes as well. “Let’s fight, shoulder to shoulder.”

The Whitewater Hound laughed. To battle to the death alongside his elder brother, one last time...it was enough.

Within the underwater estate’s Divine Abilities Hall. Within that gray, blurry void.

Slash!

Blood spray outwards. In this place, only Ji Ning would shed blood; these strongmen, upon being killed, would transform into mist. “Argh.” Ning clenched his two swords, continuing to fight with all his strength. They blocked a warhammer blow from a strongman, and then struck forward, piercing through the fat strongman’s skull. The hammer-wielding, battle-armored fat strongman dispersed into mist.

“Kill! Kill!” Ning’s eyes were filled with flame, the flame of stubbornness. But strongmen began to cluster tightly around him, each of them no

weaker than Dong Ziqi in power. Ning was now only able to kill one strongman at a time, and as they continuously charged forward, clustering attacks against him, Ning was about to be crushed beneath their tide...

# Chapter 31: Opening the Celestial Eye, Manifesting the Divine Sense

Blood splattered everywhere. Fire-Water Loti continued to swivel in the area around Ji Ning, and Ning himself continued to stand firm and kill. “I have to acquire one of the top three divine abilities.” Ning remembered what the spirit of the estate had said; he would at most be able to acquire the third divine ability. No matter how powerful that giant yellow bear, the spirit of the manor, was, he would only be able to give a vague prediction. He didn’t dare say for certain if Ning would acquire the third divine ability.

What did this mean? Even if Ning went all out, it was hard to say if he would acquire it. If that was the case, then of course Ning would have to go all out!

“Kill.” Ning’s mind was filled with the clear images of the old, cunning Ji Ninefire; of Granny Shadow, who had threatened suicide to force him away; of Ah Xing, the devoted old servant of Granny Shadow; of the heroic, steadfast Truekeep; and of course, of his glacial-face, warm-hearted father, Ji Ishwin. And Uncle White, who had doted on him ever since he was young...

“I want you to all live! Father, Uncle White, Patriarch. You all must live.” Ning stared at the strongmen charging towards him, and in his mind, there was only a single word – kill! Kill! Kill all who barred his way!

He had those he wished to protect! Those he valued! Nobody could take them away!

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The nine swords controlled by divine will assisted Ning, helping him block nearby attacks. Those nine swords supported him, but the flood of strongmen continued to roar furiously as they threw themselves towards the encircled Ning. Ning’s struggling efforts grew weaker and weaker, but his gaze was filled with ever-greater berserk fury and steadfast resolve.

He knew what he needed to do. He knew his own heart.

“Bang!”

Within his soul, there was a colossal explosion, a sound akin to Pangu splitting open the heavens and establishing the universe. Ning’s divine will, which had originally been those nine flying swords...could now sense with incomparable clarity the location of every single strongman around him. He could even clearly sense every single bit of skin, flesh, and hair on their bodies. That distant, pitch-black tablet nearby. Those giant tables, filled with large amounts of weapons. It was all within his range of sense.

It was as though...Ning had gained an additional eye, an eye which could clearly see everything around him, letting nothing escape!

“Divine sense!” Ning instantly understood. His divine will had already evolved to a new, higher level. Zifu Disciples were generally all capable of dividing their minds, and Wanxiang Adepts were mostly capable of manifesting their divine will to control material items. Only Primal Daoists were capable of opening the Celestial Eye and manifest their divine sense. Everything within the range of one’s divine sense would be revealed, as though seen clearly with the naked eye.

It was extremely hard to progress in the soul, but in the path of Immortals, the soul was incomparably important. Only a sufficiently powerful soul would be able to command ever-greater amounts of elemental energy. If an ordinary mortal was in possession of the elemental energy of an Immortal, there was only one possible outcome; he wouldn’t be able to tame the elemental energy, which would wildly burst forth and shatter his bones and his flesh, slaying him.

Advancing in the soul was something which could be done through visualization techniques, through gaining comprehension into the Dao, through strengthening the body to support the soul, or through training one’s will.

Training the will...another phrase for it might be training one’s Dao-heart! Ning had already reached the ‘divine will’ level when he was eleven. In the past five years, Ning had made astonishing amounts of progress with regards to comprehending the Dao, eventually reaching the Dao



Domain level. Clearly, this had all been very beneficial to his soul.

His body had just reached the Blood-Drop Rebirth level as a Fiendgod refiner, allowing him to once more strengthen the body to support the soul. And, in the past five years, he had visualized the [Nuwa Painting] every single day, allowing him to rise in power ceaselessly. And today...

Ning had first battled at Oxhorn Mountain, then witnessed his clansmen decide to fight to the death, and had even chosen to flee alone, then undergo the Divine Abilities Hall's trial in the hopes of acquiring one of the top three divine abilities. Everything he had experienced today...it had all tested and forged his will. In utter despair, his will had grown only stronger. And his Dao-heart had become even more perfectly pure and durable.

The Dao-heart and the will...to the soul, they were like the commanders of an army! The same soldiers, if led by strict military discipline, would only rise in battle-strength considerably. But if the military leadership was poor, they would be much less effective.

The same was true for the Dao-heart and the will. A soul, when determined, would allow the Immortal practitioner to unleash great power. Even if one's base of elemental Ki energy was extremely deep, one would still need to use will in order to forcibly summon and activate that power. When one's will was weak, however, the excessively formidable amount of elemental energy would be rendered unusable, and perhaps even some simple bewitching illusions would cause one to perish.

Thus, to Immortal practitioners, training one's Dao-heart was extremely important. The more perfect and pure one's Dao-heart was, the farther one would be able to travel on the Immortal path.

"Five years of comprehending the Dao. Five years of visualization. My increase in power as a Fiendgod refiner. All of these things established a firm, solid base for me. Today, my Dao-heart has been further tempered, allowing me to break through at one blow, to open my Celestial Eye and establish my divine sense." A vertical-pupiled eye suddenly appeared in the middle of Ning's forehead. This vertical-pupiled eye was the corridor

to the 'soul' in Ning's consciousness; it was as though Ning's soul was staring towards the outside world through this eye.

Within the Celestial Eye's range of vision, Ning could instantly tell how these strongmen had been condensed from the fog and energy. "Close." The eye in the middle of Ning's forehead closed.

Upon the Celestial Eye opening, even some of the high level transformations which various monsters and devils were capable of unleashing would be easily seen through. In addition, the divine sense covered an extremely wide region, and could see everything within it with perfect clarity. Even in the middle of a bewildering formation, the divine sense could sense everything clearly, preventing it from bewitching Ning.

Ordinary formations, especially bewildering formations, were generally of limited use against Immortal practitioners who were capable of using divine sense. But of course, there were some powerful formations capable of bewildering even the divine sense, but the vast majority of Wanxiang Adepts didn't have access to those sorts of grand formations.

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"Whoosh!" The nine swords, controlled by divine will, suddenly increased in power tremendously. Nine rays of sword light howled as they flashed through the air, chopping one row after another of strongmen into two pieces. All of their heads went flying, their bodies shattering and dissolving into the mist.

"Kill, kill kill." A look of delight appeared on Ning's face. "All of you, come over here." Ning stared towards the table in front of him, which was covered with many weapons. One sword after another rose into the air, and a dense cluster of nearly a hundred flying swords flew towards him, all of them transforming into flowing, liquid streams of sword light. With each blow, they slaughtered a heap of strongmen, and many strongmen constantly collapsed, dispersing into mist.

Nearly a hundred swords, transformed into nearly a hundred rays of sword light, danced around Ning. As for Ning himself, he stood there, not needing to fight personally any longer.

“My divine will is now too powerful.” Ning was completely stunned and overjoyed. His divine will had undergone a qualitative change, and its range had been expanded to as far as he could see with the naked eye. As for the power of his divine will to control material objects, it had risen by a terrifying amount! Previously, when his divine will had controlled those swords, it had done so with the power of an early-stage Zifu-level Fiendgod. But now, the evolved divine will contained the power of a peak-stage Zifu-level Fiendgod!

The power of his divine will was now even greater than Ning’s own physical power as a Fiendgod! Such a terrifying strength...when amplified by the Rainwater Sword Domain, even when just using some simple sword techniques rather than the ‘Rain Line’ technique, each blow swept through a crowd of enemies. In addition, the controlled swords didn’t need to worry about defense, and thus were able to display sword techniques in an even fiercer, more vicious manner. Their power would naturally be tremendous.

Whoosh! Whoosh! Whoosh!

Groups after groups of strongmen collapsed. Under the dominating, sweeping prowess of those hundred swords, the strongmen died at an astonishing rate. “My divine will is now even more powerful than I am in close-quarters combat.” Ning murmured to himself. His soul had advanced far, far more than he had as a Fiendgod Body Refiner or as a Ki Refiner. His soul was already at the level of ‘Opening the Celestial Eye, Manifesting the Divine Sense’, a level which only Primal Daoists should be able to reach.

Every sweeping blow of the controlled swords contained greater power than Ning’s earlier, personal blows. These hundred swords were like a hundred amplified Ning’s, dominating the region. Groups of strongmen continuously collapsed, and as the rate at which they died quickened, the rate at which they were reformed quickened slightly as well.

New strongmen continuously were condensed from the mist. Kill, kill, kill! The hundred flashing sword lights struck out like roaring dragons, bellowing through the air. However, the strongmen were growing

increasingly powerful as well. The killing rate dropped from a group per blow, to five or six per blow, to two or three per blow, all the way down to one per blow. However, because the hundred swords were fighting in unison, they were still extremely efficient.

“Whew!”

Ning looked around himself. It was completely silent. There was no motion or sound, only those hundred flying swords that were hovering in the air. “No more?” Ning was stunned. “It’s empty?” Ning stared at his surroundings. The only thing present was that pitch-black tablet. The many weapons lay soundlessly on their table. It was as though this world was telling Ning...that he had killed all of the strongmen!

Whoosh. A figure appeared by his side. It was the giant yellow bear, who stared at Ning, surprise in his eyes. “Are you the reincarnation of a Celestial Immortal?” The giant yellow bear murmured. “Or the reincarnation of a Primordial Fiendgod?”

Giving how astonishingly keen Ning’s hearing was, he naturally heard the murmured words of the giant yellow bear. Reincarnation of a Celestial Immortal? Reincarnation of a Primordial Fiendgod? Others might not know about their past lives, but Ning knew it with perfect clarity.

“Simply by relying on comprehending the Dao, tempering your Dao-heart, and training your Fiendgod body...it is virtually impossible for you to raise your soul to the level of gaining ‘divine sense’.” The giant yellow bear looked at Ning. “Immortal practitioners generally need to first reach the Primal Daoist level. With the soul being nurtured within primal energy, it will grow and develop, eventually opening the Celestial Eye and establishing the divine sense.”

“First, become a Primal Daoist; then, acquire divine sense. This is the case for virtually everyone! Less than one in ten thousand Wanxiang Adepts would be able to acquire divine sense.” The giant yellow bear shook his head. “Generally speaking, those who are capable of acquiring divine sense prior to the Primal Daoist level are in actuality Immortals and other great powers who reincarnated. Or, of course, those who

encountered a tremendously good twist of fate. Can it be that you are a reincarnated Immortal? But if you truly were a reincarnated Immortal, there should have been elders of your school who came to welcome you long ago. Or...can it be that you encountered another fortunate twist of fate, even before you entered the underwater estate?"

Ning just blinked, not saying anything. Twist of fate? Would encountering the Lord of Cui Palace of the Netherworld Kingdom, and being bestowed with the Visualization Technique, [Nuwa Painting] count? Would the fact that, by luck, he managed to avoid drinking Grandma Meng's soup before being reincarnated and thus was able to train in the [Nuwa Painting] Visualization Technique as an infant count?

"Elder, which divine ability can I acquire?" Ning hurriedly asked. "You killed all of the strongmen. Naturally, you can acquire the first." The giant yellow bear blinked. "Follow me."

He grabbed Ning with his paw. Whoosh! The surrounding region of gray mist began to tremble and distort. Ning even had the strange feeling that time was passing extremely slowly, then extremely quickly.

"How much time passed?" Ning was rather nervous. He was afraid that if too much time passed, unforeseen variables would occur at Oxhorn Mountain. "Don't worry. No need to be concerned over how long this process of receiving the divine ability will take." The giant yellow bear said. "In the past, the manifestation and the divine ability which Master left behind was placed in an area completely sealed off from space and time. Thus, by comparison to the outside world, time here was virtually frozen. You could spend a century here, but only a single breath's worth of time would occur in the outside world."

Ning was secretly shocked, but he quickly calmed himself. When he had been in the Netherworld Kingdom, the regions near the Bridge of Despair moved at extremely different rates of time. Clearly, some of the great powers in the Three Realms were capable of changing the flow of time.

"I wonder what sort of divine ability the first master of the estate left behind." Ning secretly mused to himself.

# Chapter 32: Receiving the Divine Ability

They were surrounded by fog. Ji Ning and the giant yellow bear stood above the fog, and the previously contorting space and time had calmed down. “That is...!” Ning stared towards the front. Far away, in the distant corners of that boundless gray fog, there was a towering building that flashed with eye-catching golden light. It was like an altar. From the distance, one could see that it had layers of stairs, which led towards the very top of this building.

“Why are you standing here like an idiot?” The giant yellow bear grabbed Ning by the elbow, then walked forward, traveling multiple kilometers with every single step. The distant, towering edifice became clearer and clearer, and its golden light became more and more dazzling. At the same time, the boundless majesty it emanated caused Ning’s heart to tremble.

Moments later, Ning arrived at the very lowest step of this towering edifice. Raising his head, he stared upwards at the various steps. He could immediately tell that there were most likely thousands of steps, from the ground to the peak.

“Go.” The giant yellow bear raised his head, looking towards the peak of the altar as well. “Follow the steps to the very top, and accept the divine ability which Master left behind.”

“Yes.” Ning nodded. This was his stroke of good fortune! An incomparably precious stroke of good fortune! This divine ability had been left behind by one of the great powers of the Three Realms which had been created after Pangu established the universe! After learning it, he would be able to kill Adept Xu Li and save his father and family members.

“Father. Wait for your child a few moments longer.” Ning immediately began to run up the steps. But as soon as he stepped atop the first one....

BANG! It was as though the world had collapsed. Ning sensed his entire soul tremble and rumble. At the instant when Ning’s right foot landed on the first stair, it was as though he had been fused with the entire altar, and

ancient, long-gone information began to transmit directly into Ning's soul, burrowing into his memories.

The transmission had begun! Ning hadn't expected that he would begin to receive the transmission of the divine ability upon stepping onto the very first step...although he was caught somewhat off-guard, Ning quickly began to submerge himself in understanding the ancient information that was being sent towards him.

After a few moments, Ning stepped onto the second stair, and more of that ancient information flooded towards him. One step, another step, yet another step...this ancient, profound information slowly entered Ning's soul, having been divided into countless little bits and pieces, so as to allow Ning to adapt to this process. As this was a truly, incredibly powerful divine ability, if all the information regarding it had been instantly sent into Ning's soul, even though Ning's soul was powerful, he would've instantly been rendered an idiot.

"It has begun." From the below the altar, the giant yellow bear lifted his head, watching as Ning took one step after another atop the altar. His eyes held a very complicated look within them; excitement, anticipation, and wistfulness. "The divine ability which Master left behind has finally found an heir."

"Master...are you still alive?" A hint of tears appeared within the giant yellow bear's eyes. In his heart, he only had a single, true master. That was the first master of the estate. The four masters who had come afterwards, including Ji Ning, were in reality the heirs to the first master, but unfortunately, the second, third, and fourth masters hadn't been able to acquire so much as a single one of the divine abilities. Naturally, they couldn't be considered true successors. But now, Ji Ning was finally beginning to receive this divine ability.

"Master's successor." The giant yellow bear's had a lost look in his eyes, and his thoughts were whirling about. When the first master had left behind this estate then left, the giant yellow bear had known...that the first master had gone to deal with a tremendous tribulation. Precisely because even the first master wasn't absolutely confident in his ability to survive

the tribulation, he had created this estate, as he was unwilling to permit the divine ability he was proudest of to simply disappear with him.

Countless years had passed...the Three Realms had become fixed and orderly. The three thousand major worlds and the trillions of lesser worlds had been born. But his master had never returned to this estate. This filled the giant yellow bear's heart with unease. Was his master still alive? Although he worried about his master in his heart, he continued to obey his master's order, and treated finding a successor as the most important matter of all.

.....

One step. Then another step. Atop the towering, lofty edifice, Ning continued to slowly advance upwards. He didn't know how much time had passed, but finally, he had reached the top.

Only now did Ning awaken from his trance. The primordial, ancient divine ability's information as well as tricks and knacks had all been infused into his soul. They were like words that had been printed atop his soul itself; even if Ning wanted to forget them, he wouldn't be able to. And even if someone used a technique to search his soul, they wouldn't be able to find anything.

"The divine ability...[Starseizer Hand]." Ning murmured gently to himself. He could clearly see one image after another in his mind. There was a vast, boundless void, and within it, there was a giant hand that seemed to be countless kilometers in length. The giant hand passed through the endless void, actually snatching at one of the stars within the void and easily crushing it into dust.

Under the strikes of that infinitely large hand, the vast, towering bodies of a countless sea of Fiendgods who were shouting boastfully were all smashed into nothingness.

That giant hand cupped a world within it, and trapped within the world was a fiery Fiendgod who radiated flames. With a gentle pinch of the giant hand, the world was shattered and the Fiendgod perished.

.....



“Beyond the Three Realms, there is the infinite void. The void contains the Solar Star and the Lunar Star, the two most exalted of celestial bodies, as well as numerous other powerful stars. These stars are infinitely majestic and powerful, and even Celestial Immortals would find it difficult to do anything to them. Some of the bits and pieces of rubble which fall down from these stars, after passing through the endless, infinite void, might land on various worlds, where they will be treated as precious materials for forging magic treasures. And yet, my master’s divine ability is named the ‘Starseizer’; from this, one can imagine how infinitely powerful it is.” The giant yellow bear appeared by Ning’s side.

Ning nodded lightly. After having received this divine ability, he could clearly sense how terrifyingly powerful it was. It’s power completely surpassed his imagination. Ning understood, now, why the giant yellow bear had wanted for him to wait five years...why he had felt that it would be better to let Ning’s father and family die, rather than lose the chance to acquire this divine ability.

However, what was meant to be would be. Although Ning had stubbornly insisted on immediately challenging the Divine Abilities Hall, in the end, he had still acquired this divine ability.

“In the end, you still learned this divine ability.” The giant yellow bear looked at Ning. “If it weren’t for the fact that your soul had reached the ‘divine will’ level, even five years later, you would only have had a good chance at acquiring the first divine ability...even I didn’t imagine that your soul would be able to make a breakthrough.”

“Oh?” Ning was shocked. “Is it truly so difficult to acquire the first divine ability? I felt as though, after my soul made a breakthrough, I completely dominated the enemies to the point of annihilating all of the strongmen.”

The giant yellow bear glanced sideways at Ning. “If you didn’t have your divine will, even after five years, would your divine power have lasted long enough for you to annihilate that many strongmen?”

Ning came to his senses. Right. He had relied on his divine will to control nearly a hundred swords to dominate and slaughter those

strongmen. This didn't use up any of his divine power. But if he didn't have divine will, and had relied on close-quarters combat...he would have used up an astonishing amount of divine power! For example, when he had reached the later stages of the test of the Divine Abilities Hall, he had less than 20% of his divine power remaining, while the strongmen had only grown more and more powerful.

"No matter what, in the end, you succeeded and acquired this. This divine ability." The giant yellow bear pointed at a giant, distant prayer mat. "Go to that prayer mat. To kneel and pay your respects to Master."

"Right." Ning nodded. The benevolence a master showed in teaching his art was as weighty as the heavens themselves. Ning walked forward, then immediately fell to his knees before the prayer mat.

As soon as he knelt down, instantly, at the top of the altar, directly in front of Ning, a towering figure suddenly appeared, at least three thousand meters in height. He had ancient, bronze skin, a glowing face, and wore roughly sown bestial furs as clothes. His appearance was similar to humans, with the only difference being that he had only a single arm! He had only a single right arm, and did not have a left arm.

This majestic figure stared at Ning, a faint look of pleasure on his face. He said softly, "You have already received the divine ability. Once you overcome your Celestial Tribulation and become a Celestial Immortal, you can be considered the disciple of myself, Daoist Threelives. Do not be negligent and lazy, and thus lower my prestige." And then, the massive, single-armed figure gently pointed with his right hand towards Ji Ning.

Whooooosh. Five rays of light instantly shot towards Ning...and then, the towering figure suddenly disappeared. A look of surprised joy on Ning's face, Ning instantly sat down in the lotus position. The five rays of light quickly flooded into Ning's body, and slowly, ripples began to appear on Ning's form as well.

"Master." The giant yellow bear saw the towering, one-armed figure appear, then vanish. He couldn't help but mumble to himself. He knew... that the illusion was nothing more than something his master had left

behind. Anyone who received his master's divine ability and who came to the top of this altar and knelt down before this prayer mat would cause illusion to appear.

Ning was seated in the lotus position, and his two hands were currently emanating five-colored lights. Ning's hands seemed to have transformed into some sort of precious treasures. The five-colored lights swirled about them, then slowly began to fuse together into a chaotic color.

"Whew." Everything fell silent, and Ning's hands returned to normal as well. Ning opened his eyes, then lowered his head to look at the palms of his hands. With but a thought, the palms of his hands manifested a complicated, circular divine tattoo. "Divine Starseizing Tattoo! The Starseizer has six cycles, and I've already successfully completed the first one." And then, the divine tattoos faded away, no longer visible to the naked eye.

Every single divine ability required tremendous amounts of time to train in. They wouldn't be mastered in one go. Even techniques like the [Heavenly Transformation] or the [Windwing Evasion] had to be trained in multiple stages.

As for this divine ability, [Starseizing Hand], the way in which it was trained in was known as the [Six Cycles of the Starseizer]. Only upon reaching the Zifu level as a Fiendgod could one train in the first cycle! At the Wanxiang Adept level, one could train in the second. As a Primal Daoist, one could train in the third.

With each breakthrough into a completely new level as a Fiendgod, one could train in the next cycle. This divine ability placed tremendous pressure on the divine body, and if it wasn't strong enough, there was no way it could be trained.

"The teachings you received of the divine ability [Starseizing Hand] are the original teachings." The giant yellow bear said. "Even if you train all the way to the first master's level, this divine ability will still be enough for you to use. As for the [Windwing Evasion] you trained in, that was only the simplified version."

“Simplified?” Ning was startled. “How could the divine abilities that the primordial Fiendgods used to dominate the Three Realms be so casually taught to others?” The giant yellow bear shook his head. “Shortly after Pangu established the heavens, one of the primordial Fiendgods, a giant Roc, developed a type of flying evasion technique. With a single sweep of his wings, he could traverse a hundred thousand kilometers. This flying technique is the divine ability...[Garuda’s Wings]! I imagine some great power must have watched the Roc fly. After meditating on it for a long period of time, he wrote down this book known as the [Windwing Evasion].”

Ning nodded slightly. So this divine ability, [Windwing Evasion], was just actually the simplified version of the [Garuda’s Wings].

“If you had the original teachings of this technique in book form, you could spend thousands of years reading it.” The giant yellow bear said. “You spent many months memorizing Master’s [Starseizing Hand], even though it was directly sent into your soul. How could the original copy of a true divine ability be so easily memorized?”

“I spent months traversing those steps?” Ning was shocked. “Only an instant passed in the outside world. No need to worry about your father.” The giant yellow bear said.

Ning nodded, then said solemnly, “Senior, dare I ask, who exactly is this master of mine, ‘Daoist Threelives’?” Just now, that giant, towering illusion had only referred to himself as ‘Daoist Threelives’. Ning knew nothing else of him.

# Chapter 33: Evanescent Demonslayer

## Sword

The giant yellow bear, upon hearing Ning speak of his master, 'Daoist Threelives', couldn't help but feel very happy. He immediately said, "Ji Ning, do you know that when Fiendgods are born, there are differences in their levels as well?"

"Differences in Fiendgods at birth? Aren't they all born from the universe itself?" Ning asked. "No." The giant yellow bear said. "Before the Three Realms were born, and even before Pangu established the universe, there was nothing aside from primordial chaos. In that era, the primordial chaos gave birth to some ancient and powerful Fiendgods, such as Pangu or Nuwa. They were Fiendgods who were born from the primordial chaos. Some of these Primordial Fiendgods were strong, while others were weak. The most powerful of them was naturally Pangu!"

"After Pangu established the universe, the universe itself gave birth to some new living creatures. These creatures, being born from the universe itself, were also referred to as innate, Heavenborn Fiendgods. Afterwards, after many transformations, the three thousand major worlds were created, and in the process of the creation of each major world, some Fiendgods would be created. These are the most ordinary of Fiendgods."

"In short, Fiendgods can be classified according to when they were born; there are Primordial Fiendgods, Heavenborn Fiendgods, and ordinary Fiendgods." The giant yellow bear looked at Ning. "As for Master, he is one of the Primordial Fiendgods."

Ning held his breath. What a tremendous history! But when he thought about it carefully, it made sense for Fiendgods to be divided into three different tiers, based on their birth. After all, Pangu was capable of establishing the universe itself; from this, one could imagine how powerful he was. As for many of the other Fiendgods which Ning had heard of, some of them were only at the Xiantian level when born. Compared to Pangu...they were countless times weaker.

As for this Daoist Threelives, since he was so powerful, it made sense that he was born as a Primordial Fiendgod. “One’s tier of birth determines both one’s potential as well as one’s power at birth.” The giant yellow bear said. “But no matter how lowly one’s class is at birth, one still has the chance to become an awe-inspiring, major figure of the Three Realms. For example, there are some individuals who were born as members of extremely ordinary races, but after undergoing countless tribulations, also became powerful figures who could stand shoulder-to-shoulder with Master.”

“Ji Ning, although you are merely a human, you too have this chance.” The giant yellow bear said. Ning nodded gently. He understood. For example, the Lord of Cui Palace was another person from his homeland of Earth. And yet, he rose to become one of the most exalted figures of the Netherworld Kingdom, the First Judge of the Dead.”

“Master had countless experiences.” The giant yellow bear’s gaze grew dreamy as he thought back to the past. “He personally knew figures like Pangu and Nuwa, and even provided some guidance to the giant Roc and some other juniors. He then established his own school, and many Fiendgods flocked to his banner to listen to him expound on the Dao...and thus, Master ended up having many titles. Daoist Threelives, Daoist Starseizer, One-Armed Divine Master, True God of the Right Arm...”

Ning had a thought, and he hurriedly asked, “Could it be that Master, Daoist Threelives, was born with just one arm?”

“No.” The giant yellow bear shook his head. “Although I don’t know the details, I know that when Master was born from the primordial chaos, he had two arms. Afterwards, because of a major battle, he lost an arm. Master felt deep shame due to this, and thus from that day onwards, only permitted himself to have a single arm. But precisely because he only had a single arm, Master made a further breakthrough in the divine ability, ‘Starseizing Hand’, which he had developed while meditating within the primordial chaos. He reached an even more divine, miraculous level! This breakthrough made it so that the Starseizing Hand could be ranked as one of the ten strongest divine abilities out of the countless divine abilities

that had been devised after Pangu established the universe!”

A look of surprised shock appeared on Ning’s face. What an incredible fellow! This Master of Ning’s, whom he had only seen as an illusion, was actually this powerful? How many Fiendgods had there been since Pangu had established the universe? How many divine abilities had been devised? For the Starseizing Hand to be ranked amongst the top ten...it was far more astonishing than he had been able to imagine, previously.

“You have no need to ask about anything else for now.” The giant yellow bear looked at Ning. “After countless years have passed and countless eras, the universe is now in the era of the three thousand major worlds and the trillion lesser worlds. This is the era of the Celestial Court administering the Three Realms harmoniously. To you, these ancient secrets of the primordial eras are far too distant and irrelevant. There is no point in you learning these things; they will only vex you unnecessarily. Master once said that only after you become a Celestial Immortal, will you truly be considered Master’s disciple.”

Ning nodded.

“It is time for you to leave now.” The giant yellow bear said. “No rush.” Ning said hurriedly. “My Fiendgod body has just reached the Zifu level. According to the rules of the Treasure Hall, I should be able to select another Mortal-ranked magic treasure, right?”

The giant yellow bear nodded. To acquire a magic treasure from the Treasure Hall, there were only two possibilities; one was to rise to a new level as a Fiendgod, while the other was to challenge the Wargod Hall.

“Senior, please provide me with a list of the Mortal-ranked magic treasures of the Treasure Hall.” Ning said. “I’ll read it here, and decide on which treasure I want. After I leave, I’ll be able to choose it immediately.”

“You certainly know how to save time.” The giant yellow bear laughed. The list of treasures was extremely complicated. It required quite a bit of time to review. In this place of transmission of knowledge, separated from time and space from the outside world, time moved at a much slower rate. It naturally would be best for him to do the reading here.

“Right.” The giant yellow bear said. “Your soul has now reached the level of having ‘divine sense’, and you have learned the divine ability, [Starseizing Hand]. It would be simplicity itself for you to challenge the second level of the Wargod Hall, and you even have a chance to challenge the third level. Would you be willing to do so?”

“I only have a ‘chance’ at challenging the third level?” Ning asked. His power had already risen by an astonishing amount. He had made a spiritual breakthrough! He had also now acquired an incredibly powerful divine ability, the [Starseizing Hand]. He was completely confident in being able to slay Adept Xu with a single blow.

“If your divine power was strong enough to allow you to use the [Starseizing Hand] with abandon, then of course you would have a high chance of success.” The giant yellow bear smirked. “But how many times will your current level of Scarlet Shine divine power permit you to use the [Starseizing Hand]?”

Ning hesitated slightly, then stretched out his hands. The Divine Starseizing Tattoos appeared, and the Scarlet Shine divine power in his body filled his two palms. A surge of incomparably powerful might filled Ning’s mind, and he even felt as though he could shatter a mountain with a single slap from his hands.

“Bang!” “Bang!” Ning’s two hands each formed sword-fingers, chopping down towards the air in front of him. Swish! Swish! Two rays of pressured energy waves, emitting an ear-piercing howl, rumbled out like crashing thunder.

“So powerful.” Ning was tongue-tied from awe. He hadn’t used any sword techniques, simply pointed with two fingers in a sword-finger position, and yet the energy wave had been so astonishing...Ning had the feeling that if Jadechild was in front of him, he could smash Jadechild to smithereens with a single palm.

“However, the amount of divine power which is used up is also astonishing.” Ning mused to himself, “I only struck out a single time, but I used up so much. The Scarlet Shine divine power in my body probably is



only enough to permit me to strike out a few dozen times.”

In a life-and-death battle, a few dozen strikes was more than enough. But to challenge the Wargod Hall, for his divine power to only be able to last for so long truly wouldn't be enough.

“I won't challenge the Wargod Hall.” Ning said. “I don't have the time to waste.” “Right.” The giant yellow bear nodded. He pointed to an empty space nearby, and an extremely thick book with golden lettering appeared. Atop it were two characters, for the words ‘Precious Treasure’. “Because this is your second time selecting a Mortal-ranked magic treasure, the amount of treasures available in this book will be greater than previously. If you were to challenge and overcome the second level of the Wargod Hall, when choosing your third magic treasure, you would be permitted to freely choose from all of the Mortal-ranked magic treasures which Master acquired.”

Ning understood. This was the difference between challenging the first and the second levels of the Wargod Hall. The second level was far more difficult than the first level, so naturally, the rewards would be different as well. Although it was still a matter of selecting Mortal-ranked magic treasures, the further along this path he went, the greater his choices would be.”

“Indeed.” As Ning flipped through the book, he immediately saw the difference. “There are some more treasures recorded here than there was last time, and the additions are all extremely rare and powerful treasures.”

“Jade Dragon Cutters...what a savage magic treasure.” Ning read carefully. “Souldrinker Bell. Far more powerful than the Myriad Wraths Banner, and on a much higher level.” Ning sighed in praise. If Bei Zishan had completed his Myriad Wraiths banner, it would have become a top-grade Mortal-ranked item. The methods by which it was created, however, were simply too despicable. By comparison, this Souldrinker Bell was far more intricate and exquisite, and in terms of power, it was even more powerful than a Myriad Wraiths Banner.

Ning read through the descriptions of one treasure after another. There

were magic treasures, there were formation flags...although all of them moved Ning, there wasn't a single one which inspired a great feeling of desire within Ji Ning. This was because, after acquiring the divine ability, [Starseizing Hand], the Darknorth Swords in Ning's hands would swing out with extremely great power already. Although these magic treasures were powerful, if Ning were to control them, the power released would be far weaker from the power released from him using his divine ability.

"Magic treasures are inferior to divine abilities, it seems." Ning sighed in his heart. In reality, he had forgotten that the real issue was...what sort of divine ability he had just learned!

"Eh?" Ning flipped past another page. His eyes suddenly lit up. This magic treasure was known as the Evanescent Demonslayer Sword. It was a top-grade Mortal-ranked magic treasure, a magic treasure that had been created for the purpose of slaughter. It was forged from an extremely precious material, the golden Nirvana crystals. This was a magic treasure which was extremely well suited for slaughter and for sneak attacks. It was originally an Earth-ranked magic treasure, but after repeated forgings, it had dropped in power to become a top-grade Mortal-ranked magic treasure. However, after committing enough slaughter, it could slowly rise in power to its innate level, and once more become an Earth-ranked magic treasure.

Ning read through the descriptions carefully. There were incomparably detailed notes regarding this magic treasure. According to the notes in this book, it was indeed true that some of the top-grade Mortal-ranked magic treasures Daoist Threelives had kept here had the potential for future growth. However, it wasn't its potential for growth which attracted Ning.

"Alright. This is the one I choose." Ning felt joy in his heart. The Evanescent Demonslayer Sword had an aura of impermanence and transience about it; it was very hard to detect. Even if the Evanescent Demonslayer Sword drew close to a foe, the foe probably wouldn't sense anything. This was what pleased Ning the most about it.

Ning continued to flip through the book at a slightly faster clip, finally finishing it. "And?" The giant yellow bear looked at Ning. "Evanescent

Demonlayer Sword.” Ning said.

“Haha, good eye.” The giant yellow bear nodded. “I, too, felt that the Evanescent Demonlayer Sword is the most suited to you. This Evanescent Demonlayer Sword is extremely good at hiding its aura, and quite suited to stealth attacks. Now that you have made a breakthrough in your soul, your divine will is incomparably astonishing. You can absolutely control this Evanescent Demonlayer Sword to engage in long-distance sneak attacks! More importantly, you don’t even need to fill it with your elemental Ki; this will further lessen the Ki ripples, making it even harder for your enemies to detect your Evanescent Demonlayer Sword.”

Ning nodded. This was what he had been thinking about as well. He didn’t need to use his elemental Ki, and could simply use divine will to control this Evanescent Demonlayer Sword...

This magic treasure was innately hard to detect. Without any elemental Ki ripples, it was just like an ordinary piece of muddy rock. It was too hard to notice it. His divine will could stealthily control the Evanescent Demonlayer Sword to drill through the ground until it reached the enemy, then suddenly attack!

Even a Wanxiang Adept, upon suffering a sneak attack at close quarters, probably wouldn’t have enough time to command his magic treasures before having his head pierced.

“My divine will is perfectly matched for combination attacks with this Evanescent Demonlayer Sword.” Ning mused to himself. “Senior, let’s go now.” Ning said hurriedly. Since he had acquired the Evanescent Demonlayer Sword, he needed to immediately return to Oxhorn Mountain.

“Alright. Hurry up a bit. Previously, you spent roughly an hour undergoing the trial of the Divine Abilities Hall.” The giant yellow bear grabbed Ning, and then in the next breath, they vanished into thin air.

# Chapter 34: Ji Ning Returns, The Final Battle

It was already close to nightfall. The edges of the Golden Crow could still be seen, setting in the west.

At the northern edges of Serpentwing Lake.

Whoosh! A figure suddenly surged into the skies, moving as fast as lightning. This was Ji Ning, who had just been teleported out of the aquatic estate. Ning's right hand was wielding one of his flying swords, the Evanescent Demonslayer Sword. The Evanescent Demonslayer Sword was the size of his palm, and it was so dim as to be half-translucent. The dark, translucent, palm-sized flying sword had a faint bloodstain atop it as well.

"Windwing Evasion!" Ning executed the Windwing Evasion, transforming into a ray of light and moving far faster than sound, instantly tranversing a distance of tens of kilometers.

"Father. Wait for me." Ning's eyes were filled with urgency. Previously, he had acquired this most suitable of assassination weapons, the Evanescent Demonslayer Sword. Now, Ning had been immediately teleported to the northernmost part of Serpentwing Lake. He immediately moved forward, binding this new treasure to him while flying forward.

"I spent an hour in the Divine Abilities Hall. Father. You have to be able to hold on." Ning burned with urgency. Whoosh! He was like a giant Roc in flight. Even Xiantian lifeforms probably wouldn't even be able to catch a glimpse of Ji Ning as he moved forward.

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Roughly two minutes later, Ji Ning saw, far in the distance, that grand sealing formation, which looked like a giant shell of clear water. The grand sealing formation completely covered covered the entire Oxhorn Mountain.

Although the distance from Serpentwing Lake to Oxhorn Mountain was thousands of kilometers, Ning's speed was now extremely fast. It must be

understood that a Zifu Disciple who rode atop a magic treasure and travelled would be able to move two hundred thousand kilometers a day. Prior to this, when the Wanxiang Adept, Adept Xu Li, had led Dong Fanyu and the others, they had spent just two hours to make it to Swallow Mountain. They had travelled a hundred thousand kilometers in a single hour! Thus, every few minutes, they were travelling thousands of kilometers.

When using his divine ability, Windwing Evasion, Ning was far faster than Adept Xu Li. Thus, it made sense for him to be able to make it from Serpentwing Lake to Oxhorn Mountain in two minutes.

“Break!” Ning held a Darknorth Sword in his hand, and the divine tattoo atop the palm gripping the hilt of the sword began to faintly emerge. The Darknorth Sword in his hand pierced straight towards the grand sealing formation in front of him, and Ning himself didn’t lessen his speed in the slightest.

Bang! Ning shot through like a meteor, piercing directly through the grand sealing formation and into the other side! “Father!” Upon piercing through the grand sealing formation, Ning saw the nether energy emanating from up ahead. The enormous Netherwyrms lay coiled atop Oxhorn Mountain. With but a thought, Ning’s awe-inspiring divine will parted a path through the fog. His divine sense encompassed the entire Oxhorn Mountain, including the entire Netherwyrms Heavenlock Formation.

Within the field of his divine sense, everything was made clear. The frantic, worried Patriarch Ninefire. The quietly waiting Granny Shadow. His father, Ji Ishwin, who had executed the forbidden technique and whose aura had risen to the heavens...

And also the white-robed, white-haired man who looked similar to his father, but whose aura was the same as the Whitewater Hound’s.

All of them were within the reach of his divine sense. “I made it.” Ning’s heart relaxed as he hurried forward. His divine sense also encompassed Adept Xu Li, Nong Zidao, and their group. To his divine sense, the

bewildering function of the nether fog was completely useless, unable to affect Ning at all. Everything within the grand formation could be clearly seen by Ning's divine sense!

“Charge.” Ning's speed didn't lessen in the slightest. He immediately utilized his Windwing Evasion to charge towards Adept Xu Li.

Halfway up Oxhorn Mountain. The face of Ninefire, who was controlling the entire grand formation, instantly changed. Others couldn't see it, but as the master of the formation, he immediately discovered Ning charging into the Netherwurm Heavenlock Formation.

“Ji Ning?” Ninefire's face instantly turned white from terror. Ning was the hope for the Ji clan's future rise to power. He had entrusted Ning with the official writ for the City of Ten Thousand Swords. So long as Ning survived...even if the rest of them all perished, it wouldn't impact the future of the Ji clan that much. Ninefire knew that all of them were going to die, but in his heart, he had still been calm, because Ning had already escaped.

But now, Ning had returned. “Ji Ning! Leave, quick, leave!” Ninefire transmitted mentally, his thoughts filled with berserk fury. “Who told you to come back? Leave, leave!” Ninefire was truly frantic. Frantic and enraged, frantic to the point of insanity.

If Ning were to die here, then the Ji clan would truly be annihilated. He, Ninefire, would have no face with which to meet the ancestors of the Ji clan.

“Leave!!! Have you come to throw your life away?” Ninefire howled with rage. His voice carried a sobbing quality to it, but he could sense that Ning's speed hadn't lessened at all, and that he was continuing to charge straight towards Snowdragon Mountain's group.

Ninefire, upon discovering Ning's appearance, had lost his mind out of franticness. If he had calmed down, he would have realized...that Ning was clearly within the Netherwurm Heavenlock Formation, and he hadn't created a passage for Ning through the nether fog. How, then, was Ning advancing directly towards Snowdragon Mountain's group, as though he

could see them?

But Ninefire had been driven to the brink of berserk madness. Even tears had begun to appear in his eyes. How could he possibly calm down at a time like this?

“Ji Ning, leave, leave, quickly leave.” Ninefire sent frantically. “Ishwin, Ishwin, quick, stop your son. Ning didn’t leave. He’s attacking Snowdragon Mountain’s group again!”

Whoosh! Ishwin was currently leaning against a large, crooked tree trunk. Suddenly, he heard the Patriarch’s voice transmitted into his mind. And then, a corridor suddenly appeared within the nether fog which spanned into the distance. In the distance, he saw a figure moving as fast as lightning towards Ishwin’s general direction. This was because Ishwin was currently very close to Snowdragon Mountain’s group.

“Ji Ning?” Ishwin’s face instantly turned completely white as well, and disbelief appeared in his eyes. He had already prepared himself for death, and his heart had been incomparably calm because his son had departed. The Ji clan would flourish, thanks to his son, and his son’s name would become famous throughout the vast world.

But! Ji Ning had actually returned. “LEAVE!!!!” Ishwin howled hoarsely towards Ning, his face savage. “Ji Ning, who told you to return? Leave!!! If you don’t leave, even in death, I won’t be able to close my eyes in peace. Quick, leave!”

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Immediately after charging into the Netherwurm Heavenlock Formation, Ning heard the voices of the Patriarch, and then a corridor in the nether fog ahead of him appeared, revealing, in the distance, his father, Ishwin! His father, Ishwin, was currently just three hundred meters away from Adept Xu Li’s group.

“Leave!” “Quick, leave!” “If you leave, even in death, I won’t be able to close my eyes in peace!” “We will be ashamed to face the ancestors of the Ji clan!”

Patriarch Ninefire and his father, Ishwin, had been incomparably calm in the face of death, but they were now nearly at the point of collapse. Ning's appearance...was like an utter nightmare to them! They would rather have their souls destroyed than see such a sight. They were at the point of insanity.

Ning's heart trembled upon hearing his father and the Patriarch's voices. He knew what his father and the Patriarch were thinking. "They'll understand soon enough." Ning's eyes turned sharp, and a ray of light pierced through the ground, controlled by Ning's divine will. The Evanescent Demonslayer Sword was moving deep underground at a high speed towards the direction of Adept Xu Li.

Swoosh! Ning himself used his divine ability, the Windwing Evasion, and moved lightning-fast towards Adept Xu Li's group...

Surrounded by nether fog and a snowy white dragon, Adept Xu Li, Lu Huang, Nong Zidao, and the other Immortal practitioners were all quite relaxed and leisurely. Only Nong Zidao was frowning, his eyes closed as he focused on his analysis. The nether fog bewildering formation's elemental Ki ley lines had clearly grown much more complicated. Fortunately, he had gained some experience from breaking the formation previously, and so he was still able to break through this one. Only, he now needed considerably more time.

"Eh?" Adept Xu Li's face changed slightly. He turned his head, staring into the distance; he could sense that the grand sealing formation he had set up had been pierced through. "Who just passed through my sealing formation?" Adept Xu Li's heart clenched. He grew cautious, and a Dao-seal appeared in his hand out of nowhere.

As a Wanxiang Adept, he had experienced quite a few dangers. Naturally, he was very cautious. Before preparing for victory, he would first prepare his retreat in event of defeat.

"Whoosh!" "Whoosh!" The 'Black Serpent Cord' and the 'Earth Garrison Seal', his two mighty Earth-ranked magic treasures, all appeared and hovered around him, prepared to guard him at all times. But suddenly...



Swoosh! A figure charged in from within the nether fog, swooping in like a giant Roc. The figure was currently wielding a pair of swords, and moved so fast that Adept Xu Li and the others had to sigh in amazement. But upon seeing the charging figure, Adept Xu Li let out a sigh of relief, then called out in a high voice, “Ji Ning! Can it be that you have come to deliver your life...”

His voice was still echoing within the region as he summoned seventy two flying swords out of nowhere, sending them enveloping towards Ji Ning. Adept Xu Li already had some experience with dealing with Ning’s speed; this time, he immediately used the many flying swords to entangle Ji Ning.

“Bang!” An explosive sound rang out. One after another of the flying swords were knocked flying away, and a sword flash immediately appeared in front of Adept Xu Li. Boom! Boom! The Earth-ranked magic treasures, ‘Black Serpent Cord’ and ‘Earth Garrison Seal’, were all blasted away, and the sword light flashed past Adept Xu Li’s head...sending it flying.

Adept Xu Li had died!

Rumble...the snowy white dragon that had been coiling around them disappeared as well, and the Zifu Disciples, astonished, weren’t able to react at all. “Bang!” An illusory figure suddenly appeared from from the ground, slashing past Nong Zidao’s head!

Nong Zidao had been completely absorbed in analyzing the formation. Even now, he was still absorbed in his task...and so, just like that, Nong Zidao died!

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It all happened in the blink of an eye! Adept Xu Li and Nong Zidao had both died in the blink of an eye. Ji Ning had immediately used his divine ability, ‘Starseizing Hand’, while the Darknorth Swords in his hands had also unleashed their most powerful attacks. The power of these attacks was incredible. The seventy two flying swords had all been knocked away, and the two Earth-ranked magic treasures had both been sent flying as

well. The sword flash had passed directly through the snowy white dragon and slaughtered Adept Xu Li!

It was simply too fast. Adept Xu Li, upon seeing Ning, had been quite confident, but Ning's terrifying sword blow...had simply been too fast and too furious. Adept Xu had wanted to use his two Earth-ranked magic treasures to block, but before he had, Ning's sword had already killed him.

"You...you..." Only now did the other Zifu Disciples react. They stared in astonishment at Ji Ning. It had simply been too fast. In the blink of an eye, both Nong Zidao and Adept Xu Li had died? A mighty, venerable Wanxiang Adept, Xu Li, who had prior experience fighting Ji Ning...how could it be that he had been instantly killed in their first exchange of blows, to the point where he didn't even have the chance to flee? What was going on?

"Leave!" "Quick, leave!" "If you leave, even in death, I won't be able to close my eyes in peace!" "We will be ashamed to face the ancestors of the Ji clan!"

Their voices were still echoing, but then...they fell silent. The controller of the formation, Ji Ninefire, was completely stunned. As for Ning's father, Ji Ishwin, he had ignored everything and charged more than three hundred meters towards him. His face had been filled with agonized rage, and he was bellowing out the words, "Ji Ning, quick..."

His words instantly became trapped in his throat. He saw the two corpses which now lay fallen on the ground. One was Wanxiang Adept Xu Li, who previously had been as calm and composed as the wind or the clouds, yet who held power that could shake the heavens. The other was the formations expert, Nong Zidao. Blood and brain matter lay oozing on the ground. Clearly, the two were dead.

"This!" Ishwin was completely stunned. He stared in disbelief at his nearby son, who was holding a Darknorth Sword in front of Adept Xu Li's corpse.

"Ji Ning, you can be arrogant for now, but our Snowdragon Mountain will definitely avenge us!" The frenzied, grief-stricken roars of the seven

nearby Zifu Disciples nearby rang out.

# Chapter 35: Snowdragon Mountain's Prestige

Ji Ishwin was both surprised and delighted. As for the seven nearby Zifu Disciples, who were calling out bravely despite being in despair, Ishwin paid them no mind at all. The only one he cared about was Ji Ning, who was next to the bodies of those two on the ground; Adept Xu Li and Nong Zidao.

“How could...how could...it's only, only been a short while...” Ishwin couldn't believe it. How short a period of time had transpired, as he had charged over here from three hundred meters away? Adept Xu Li, an exalted Wanxiang Adept, had perished.

A corridor through the nether fog parted. Ji Ninefire, who had been watching from afar halfway up the mountain, quickly ran this way through the corridor. His face was covered with surprise and delight. Ishwin hadn't personally seen the slaughter that had just occurred, but Patriarch Ninefire had been able to vaguely sense it all through his control of the nether fog. Although it wasn't very clear, he knew without a doubt... that Ning had used only a single blow to kill Adept Xu Li.

“In a short hour, Ji Ning's actually undergone a world-shaking transformation.” Ninefire's heart was filled with unspeakable joy. “This truly is a blessing for our Ji clan!”

“Little Shadow, Liu Xing, Truekeep, all of you, come over. Snowdragon Mountain's Adept Xu Li has already perished.” Ninefire sent to them while hurrying over.

In the various other regions. Granny Shadow and the others had felt shock and terror in their hearts, because just now, they had heard Adept Xu Li roar, “Ji Ning, have you come to deliver your life?” Granny Shadow and the others were incomparably terrified upon hearing this; hadn't Ning left? Why had he returned? Or was Adept Xu Li lying?

And right in the middle of their fear, the Patriarch's voice came towards

them. "Snowdragon Mountain's Adept Xu Li has already perished."  
"Perished?" "The Wanxiang Adept perished?" Truekeep, Granny Shadow, and the others felt both astonishment as well as amazement. How could such a powerful Wanxiang Adept have died like this? They hurriedly traversed the corridors through the nether fog which had just opened before them, and they hastened towards Ning's direction.

Soon...one figure after another arrived, moving at high speed. Ji Ishwin. Ji Ninefire. Granny Shadow. Ji Truekeep. The old servant, Ah Xing. The white-robed, white-haired man. The Thunderhawk.

"Uncle White." Ning looked at the white-robed, white-haired man who had appeared before him, especially at the face that was striking similar to his father's. He couldn't help but call out in surprised delight, "You made a breakthrough?"

"By relying on the liquefied elemental essence, I broke through." The Whitewater Hound nodded. He looked towards Ji Ning with eyes filled with love. "I didn't expect that at the end, we would all survive. After all these years, I've never been able to speak with you. I didn't expect that today, Ning, my boy, I would be able to speak with you." Ning beamed.

"Adept Xu Li and Nong Zidao?" Truekeep looked at the surrounding area. "They've been cremated already." Ishwin had a rare smile on his face as well. Just now, Ning had immediately cremated the remains and taken the magic treasures. Ning pointed at the seven utterly despondent Zifu Disciples. "Patriarch, how should we deal with these seven? The seven of them aren't able to fight back at all; we can do with them as we please."

"The seven of them?" Ninefire turned his head, sweeping them with a glance. "Kill them all. Our Ji clan has already established an enormous grudge with Snowdragon Mountain. There's no point to keeping them."

"No." "Don't kill me, I'm willing to give up my treasures in exchange for my life. "You will regret it. Your Ji clan will definitely be annihilated by the fiery rage of Snowdragon Mountain." "Keep acting arrogantly. Your Ji clan will definitely be annihilated within a single day."

Some of the seven Zifu Disciples were begging for their lives, while

others were cursing angrily. Patriarch Ninefire frowned as he pointed at one of the middle-aged men. He barked, "What did you say? Our Ji clan will be annihilated within a single day?"

"Hahaha." Lu Huang laughed wildly. "Do you know who you killed? The person you just killed was a Wanxiang Adept of our Snowdragon Mountain! Wanxiang Adepts can be considered high-level members of our sect. When they die, the main sect will instantly know, and also know where they died."

The faces of Ning, Ninefire, and the others all changed. There were indeed quite a few methods by which a location could be divided. For a major sect like Snowdragon Mountain, it would be quite normal for them to leave some markings behind on their Wanxiang Adepts.

"It is one thing for us Zifu Disciples to die, but the main sect will immediately send people over to investigate the death of Adept Xu Li." Lu Huang looked at Ning. "Ji Ning. Although you are formidable and although you are a talent, in the face of our entire Snowdragon Mountain, you will definitely die."

"Right. The death of an Adept is an enormous matter. The elders of the main sect will definitely arrive within a single day. You will definitely perish."

"Before the Celestial Envoys of the Darcian Dynasty who you are waiting for will arrive, our elders of the sect will arrive."

The morale of the Zifu Disciples clearly began to rise. Swish! Suddenly, without giving them any chance to respond, a semi-translucent shadow flashed past, instantly piercing through the heads of the various Zifu Disciples. Blood sprayed everywhere, and then all of them collapsed, dead.

"So fast." "There were no warning signs at all." The faces of Ninefire, Truekeep, and the others all changed. Ning's attack had created no ripples or disturbances at all! After all, Ning hadn't even filled the Evanescent Demonslayer Sword with his elemental Ki; he had completely relied on his divine will to control it. Naturally, Ning was able to attack without giving any warning signs. The seven were still cursing in despair, but in the next

instant, they had all died.

“Xu Li is already dead.” Ning said solemnly. “The worst case scenario would be that the Snowdragon Mountain really will send even more powerful experts to come here to investigate. We need to immediately make preparations.”

“What the hell is this? There’s no end to this!” Truekeep gritted his teeth painfully. “Alas!” Patriarch Ninefire shook his head as well. Previously, they had all been incomparably excited, but now, a bucket of ice water had been poured on their heads. Their hearts turned cold!

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More than a million kilometers away from Swallow Mountain. Snow drifted down from the skies. It was perpetually freezing here. The endless mountains stretched in a chain, as far as the eye could see. Some were tall, while others were short; some had peaks that stretched into the clouds. This was the location of the main sect of one of the great powers within Stillwater Commandery, Snowdragon Mountain.

Snowdragon Mountain’s main sect was divided into three factions, and the leaders of the three factions were all Summit Lords, with the positions being assumed by Primal Daoists.

The three tallest, most awe-inspiring majestic mountain peaks...were the residences of the three Primal Daoists. There were many other mountain peaks around them, which were the residences of the various Wanxiang Adepts. Naturally, there were many Zifu Disciples who would follow these Wanxiang Adepts or serve the Primal Daoists, waiting for a chance to hear them expound on the Dao.

Within Coldfocus Peak of Snowdragon Mountain were halls and palaces. Within one of the main palaces, there was a jade bed, atop which sat a red-clothed youth in the lotus position. By his side stood a pair of maids. They stood there nervously, not daring to make a sound and disturb him.

Coldfocus Peak...it was a mountain peak that was ranked amongst the top peaks of the many mountains of Snowdragon Mountain’s main sect. The Summit Lord, Xue Hongyi, was a truly outstanding genius that had

been cultivated by Snowdragon Mountain. Age ten, Xiantian. Age sixteen, Zifu. Age thirty nine, Wanxiang. Thirty years later, after many trials and tests, he had become a member of the Darcian Dynasty's Raindragon Guard!

In the Raindragon Guard, he had learned some particularly powerful techniques. His battle prowess was now within the top three of the Wanxiang Adepts of Snowdragon Mountain.

There could be a tremendous gap in power between two Wanxiang Adepts. The likes of Adept Xu Li were simply ordinary Wanxiang Adepts. There were some particularly talented Wanxiang Adepts who trained in some extremely powerful techniques, who had extremely formidable magic treasures or divine abilities, or controlled particularly powerful golems who were capable of fighting beyond their level and approach the Primal Daoist level of combat power.

Amonst Zifu Disciples, there were outstanding talents and also comparative weaklings. The weaklings were like Ji Ninefire; the stronger ones were like Dong Ziqi. Both were peak Zifu Disciples, but a single Dong Ziqi could battle ten Ji Ninefire's. As for the more formidable ones like Jadechild, because of their divine abilities, they could dominate a group of Zifu Disciples by themselves. And of course, there were monsters like Ning ,who could kill Jadechild as easily as slaughtering a chicken.

Amongst Wanxiang Adepts, there could similarly be a great difference in power levels. Xue Hongyi was one of the most dazzling ones, who had close to a Primal Daoist's power in battle.

"Hongyi." An icy cold voice suddenly rang out by the ears of the red-clothed youth. "Hm?" The red-clothed youth opened his eyes, a look of respect appearing in them. "Master." "Your junior apprentice-brother Xu Li just perished, and it should have been within the Swallow Mountain region." The icy voice continued, "Hongyi, go make a trip to Swallow Mountain and investigate how your junior apprentice-brother Xu Li died. You are a member of the Raindragon Guard; you can borrow their teleportation array to move to Swallow Mountain as quickly as possible."



“Yes, Master.” The red-clothed youth nodded. He was an orphan whom his master had taken in, because he had been discovered on Snowdragon Mountain’s territory. Back then, because he had been found wearing not a red, cotton-padded jacket, his master had bestowed him with the surname of ‘Xue’, meaning ‘snow’, and his name as ‘Hongyi’, meaning ‘red clothes’. The relationship between himself and his master was akin to that between a true father and a son. Only, the two weren’t good at expressing it, as they both had cold, sharp personalities.

“Whoosh.” A red cloud suddenly appeared before the red-clothed youth, and in an instant, it flew out of the main hall, howling through the air as it disappeared into the horizons at an astonishing speed.

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Oxhorn Mountain. The Ji clan was currently deciding how they should deal with the expert which Snowdragon Mountain would invariably send over.

“A major sect such as Snowdragon Mountain cares the most about their reputation. Our ‘puny little Ji clan’ has killed so many of their disciples; they definitely won’t let this matter rest.” Truekeep said frantically. “Now, our only chance is to hope for the Celestial Envoy of the Darcian Dynasty to arrive. Once the Celestial Envoy arrives, we will have the protection of the Dynasty. No matter how audacious Snowdragon Mountain is, they won’t dare attack.”

“But the expert from Snowdragon Mountain will arrive within the day.” Ninefire said with a frown. “As for the Celestial Envoy of the Darcian Dynasty, the Envoy probably won’t be able to arrive within a day.” All of them were pondering.

“Our only option is to flee.” Granny Shadow said in her hoarse voice. “Right. Flee.” Ninefire said. “We cannot fight head on. We can’t let Ji Ning take on this sort of danger again. We shall flee immediately. After we flee, Snowdragon Mountain will spend some extra time investigating. As long as we can delay until the Celestial Envoy arrives, we will have succeeded.”

“I’m just afraid that if the experts of Snowdragon Mountain aren’t able

to find us, in their rage, they will harm our ordinary clansmen.” Truekeep said.

Ning’s face suddenly changed as he turned to look into the distance. “Eh?” Everyone else, seeing Ning’s face change, also turned to look towards the distance.

The nether fog around them had grown sparse. Ning and the others could now see far into the distance...and because Ning’s soul had reached the ‘divine sense’ level, his senses were extremely acute. He could sense that from far away in the sky, there were faint ripples. Thus, he had turned to look.

From afar...a towering, lofty, wide warship was currently pressing down, emanating waves of energy as it flew over. There were massive armored warriors standing atop the ship, and all of them had extraordinary auras and gazes. This group of warriors surrounded a tall, slender youngster who was dressed in a magnificent uniform and who wore a crown on his forehead. His bearing was extraordinary, and by his side there was an armored man who was fawning on him.

The warship had two mighty pillars and two flags fluttering atop them! Atop the first flag were two characters: “Still” and “Water.”

Atop the other flag were two other characters: “North” and “Mont.”

“The Northmont clan, of the Marquis of Stillwater.” Ninefire raised his head, staring at the enormous ship which flew through the airs towards them. Upon seeing the great flag atop the warship, he couldn’t help but murmur to himself.

“The Marquis of Stillwater!” Ning was shocked as well. The Sillwater Commandery was a vast, vast land, and it had all been enfeoffed to the Marquis of Stillwater! One could imagine how vast the power of the Marquis of Stillwater was. Only the Raindragon Guards could be considered to be on par with him, but with regards to some of the matters within the territory of the Marquis, not even the Raindragon Guard would dare to casually interfere in and disrupt the Marquis of Stillwater’s management of his lands.

“That is...General Dong.” Truekeep said. “The person standing next to the youngster is General Dong.”

The warship continued to fly towards them. General Dong, who stood atop the warship, by the side of the youngster in the beautiful black uniform, hurriedly barked downwards, “Members of the Ji clan and Snowdragon Mountain, hurry and pay your respects to the exalted envoy of the Marquis of Stillwater!”

His voice echoed and rumbled, reverberating throughout the lands.

# Chapter 36: The Exalted Envoy of the Marquisate of Stillwater

The exalted envoy of the Marquisate of Stillwater?

Ji Ning, Ji Ninefire, Ji Ishwin, and the others all felt puzzlement in their hearts. Upon seeing the two massive flags aboard the giant warship, they all understood that this warship belonged to the Northpeak clan of the Marquis of Stillwater, the clan with the most exalted power and authority in the entirety of Stillwater Commandery.

However, they had clearly made the report to the Darcian Dynasty, and had hoped to transfer the rights to the elemental ore mine to the Darcian Dynasty. It was the Celestial Envoy of the Darcian Dynasty which they had been awaiting this entire time. Why, then, had the envoy of the Marquis of Stillwater Commandery come?

“Come, let’s go up.” Ninefire said softly. “Right.” All of them acknowledged. Although the arrival of the envoy of the Marquisate of Stillwater was quite strange, even General Dong, the general in charge of the forces of the Darcian Dynasty stationed in Swallow Mountain, was standing next to the envoy like a fawning sycophant. How could the Ji clan possibly dare offend them?

“Let’s go.” A flying boat appeared out of nowhere. Ning and the others boarded the boat, then flew upwards into the sky. There, high in the sky, the heroic warriors aboard the warship stood proudly, clearly all at the Zifu Disciple level. This made the hearts of Ning and the others clench. This really was the Northmont clan of the Marquis of Stillwater, one of the eight hundred marquisdoms that had been enfeoffed after the Darcian Dynasty had unified the world. An ancient marquisate which had existed for countless years...any squad of warriors it casually sent out would all be at least at the Zifu Disciple level.

“Ji Ninefire, your Ji clan has had a stroke of great fortune.” General Dong snorted coldly. “The young master is right up ahead, awaiting you all. Hurry and enter.”

“Thank you, General Dong.” Ninefire said with a smile while leading Ning and the others within. The Ji clan’s forces moved across the deck of the warship, under the guidance of the armored warriors.

“How impressive.” Ning swept the area around himself slightly with his gaze, and discovered that this warship was covered with complicated runes. A powerful aura lay hidden within this warship. “This shouldn’t be a magic treasure; it should be some sort of mechanical golem-ship!”

The warship was divided into three floors. Ascending the stairs, Ning and the others moved into the main hall of the second floor. This main hall was extremely broad, and within there was a youngster in a luxurious black uniform. This black-uniformed youngster was staring through the window, hands clasped, towards the boundless mist outside. By his side, there were two maids, and an old man who was nervously standing in a corner.

“Dong Fanyu!” Ning instantly recognized this person. This was one of the Zifu Disciples of the Swallow Mountain branch of Snowdragon Mountain. Although he had never seen this man in person before, he had seen his image in intelligence reports.

“Where is Adept Xu?” Dong Fanyu, upon seeing the Ji clan enter, couldn’t help but say in astonishment, “Where are senior apprentice-brother Zidao and the others?” But no members of the Ji clan paid him any heed.

“We pay our respects to the exalted envoy,” Ninefire said, immediately bowing low, almost to the ground. Behind him, Ning and the others all bowed in respect as well.

Only now did the black-uniformed youth who had been looking through the window with clasped hands turn to them. His face was smooth and pale. A faint smile was on his face, and he looked quite amiable. Sweeping them with a glance, he said, “Arise.” Only now did the members of the Ji clan rise from their bow.

“Eh?” The black-uniformed youth frowned, then laughed, “Just your group? General Dong, didn’t you say that Snowdragon Mountain and the Ji

clan were engaging in a battle here at Oxhorn Mountain?”

General Dong hurriedly said to him, “Reporting to the young master: Snowdragon Mountain did indeed have quite a few Immortal practitioners who were battling the Ji clan at Oxhorn Mountain. Didn’t Dong Fanyu also stated that even the Wanxiang Adept, Xu Li, had gone to participate? Ji Ninefire! I ask you this: Where are the forces of Snowdragon Mountain? The exalted envoy of the Marquis of Stillwater has come; how dare they not come to pay their respects?”

Ji Ninefire hurriedly said, “Reporting to the exalted envoy: The forces of Snowdragon Mountain wished to destroy my Ji clan. My Ji clan strove to battle against them, and in the end, annihilated all of the invading forces of Snowdragon Mountain.”

“Impossible!” Dong Fanyu, who had been listening nearby, bellowed out, “Adept Xu Li was a Wanxiang Adept. How could the Zifu Disciples of your Ji clan have killed Adept Xu Li? As I see it, by relying on your grand formation, you’ve separated everything within from the outside world. You knew that the young master has arrived, but Adept Xu Li and the others remain trapped within the formation and do not know of his arrival.”

The black-uniformed youngster stood there, not speaking, just watching.

Ninefire said, “Adept Xu Li truly has perished. Ji Ning.” Ninefire turned and spoke to Ning. “Take out Adept Xu Li’s magic treasure, that giant seal; let this Dong Fanyu take a look.” Ning waved his hand, and that grand seal appeared within it. It was the ‘Earth Garrison Seal’. The appearance of it alone indicated that it possessed extraordinary power.

Dong Fanyu said, astonished, “I, I’ve never seen Adept Xu Li use his grand seal, but I’ve flown atop the Adept’s flying magic treasures.”

“This should be an Earth-ranked magic treasure.” The black-uniformed youngster suddenly said. Ning waved his hand again, and a small ship appeared within his palm. Although it was within his palm, it was enough to instantly turn Dong Fanyu’s face ashen. “How can this be!”

The nearby General Dong’s pupils contracted, and then he laughed, “It seems as though this Ji clan has rather extraordinary abilities. Previously,

according to Dong Fanyu's report, Dong Ziqi, Jadechild, and nearly twenty other Zifu Disciples perished here at Oxhorn Mountain. I didn't expect that even Adept Xu Li and the others who hastened here would all perish here as well."

Clap! Clap! Clap! The black-uniformed youngster suddenly began to clap his hands. "I am Northmont Baiwei." The black-uniformed youngster laughed. "I imagine all of you from the Ji clan know why I have come on this trip. I'm here for that elemental ore mine within the borders of your Ji clan's domain. My goal is simple – I wish for your Ji clan to transfer the rights to the elemental ore mine to the Marquisate of Stillwater, and our estate will also give your clan 30%!"

Ninefire stuttered, "But, but we've already report this to the Darcian Dynasty..." "No need to worry." The black-uniformed youngster shook his head. "The Marquisate of Stillwater arrived first. After we sign a transfer agreement, even if the Celestial Envoy of the Darcian Dynasty arrives, it will be to no avail. The Marquisate of Stillwater will naturally shield you in this matter."

The members of the Ji clan all let out sighs of relief. To the Ji clan, transferring the mine to the Marquisate of Stillwater or to the Darcian Dynasty made no difference. Within the Stillwater Commandery...the Marquisate of Stillwater had a status that was equivalent to the Darcian Dynasty's, because this land had been enfeoffed to the Marquis of Stillwater. If the Marquis of Stillwater chose to take control over certain matters, not even the Darcian Dynasty would find it easy to casually intervene.

"Are you willing?" Northmont Baiwei smiled. "Willing, willing!" Ninefire said hurriedly. Ning and the others didn't speak out in opposition. "Excellent." Baiwei smiled, then nodded. "I will order my people to go and investigate the quality of this elemental ore mine. Also; the rest of you can retire, but Ji Ning is to stay behind."

Ji Ning was to stay behind? The Ji clan was startled. The nearby Dong Fanyu and General Dong all bowed and immediately said, "Yes," then obediently departed. Although the Ji clan was puzzled, they still

acknowledged the order and left.

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“Ji Ninefire. Congratulations.” General Dong, walking atop the wide planks of the ship, said with clasped hands. “Luck, all luck.” Ninefire hurriedly laughed, but a look of surprise was on his face. “Our Ji clan didn’t make a report to the Marquisate of Stillwater. How did they manage to send someone over so quickly?”

“How should I know?” General Dong shook his head. “If I sent someone to make a report, they probably wouldn’t even have arrived at the city of Stillwater yet.” Ninefire nodded lightly.

Everyone in the Ji clan was rather worried about Ning, who had remained in the hall. Dong Fanyu, off to the side, was gnashing his teeth. Even Adept Xu Li had died. He felt completely unable to accept this.

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Within the hall. Only Northmont Baiwei and Ji Ning were present, along with two maids.

“Young master, might I ask why you have asked me, Ji Ning, to stay behind?” Ning said with great courtesy. “No need to stand on ceremony.” Baiwei sat down, then pointed at a nearby black chair and said, “You can sit as well. Also, my name is Northmont Baiwei. You can just address me as Baiwei; I don’t actually have an official position.”

“Thank you, young master Baiwei.” Ning sat down. Baiwei looked towards Ning. “At eleven years of age, you slaughtered the criminal Bei Zishan, who the Raindragon Guard was pursuing. You should now be sixteen years of age. If my guess is correct, the reason why the Ji clan was able to exceed everyone’s expectations this time and cause Snowdragon Mountain to suffer major losses was because of you, Ji Ning.”

Ning was startled. This young master, Northmont Baiwei, seemed to know quite a few things. He even knew that Ning was the one who had killed Bei Zishan.

“No need to worry. I didn’t investigate you on purpose.” Baiwei smiled.



“To be honest, this is the first time I’ve come out on a mission on Father’s orders. Naturally, I must be cautious when carrying out my first assignment. Although this mission is a simple one, I still did a careful investigation into your Ji clan.”

Ning was secretly startled. The Northmont clan of Stillwater was an ancient clan that had existed for as nearly as long as the Darcian Dynasty itself had. The descendants of a clan like this were simply extraordinary; even when serving as an envoy to a minor clan like the Ji clan, they would first investigate everything clearly. From this, one could tell how cautious they were.

“You killed Bei Zishan at age eleven, then Jadechild and Xu Li at age sixteen.” Baiwei sighed, impressed. “Even though you relied on the supporting power of a formation, I must admit that I am in admiration for your record in battle.”

“I risked my life, and luck was on my side.” Ning shook his head and sighed. “My Ji clan very nearly perished, there at Oxhorn Mountain.” When he thought back to the twists and turns of the battle on Oxhorn Mountain, Ning still felt some lingering fear.

“You had luck, but you also had strength.” Baiwei said. “A genius like will truly be stifled in a small place like Swallow Mountain. Given your talent...if you don’t have a formidable master instructing you, I fear that in the future, it will be hard for you to achieve great things. For example, if you don’t have access to some supreme training techniques, it will be hard for you to even become a Wanxiang Adept.”

Ning nodded. “I do indeed have the intention of going on a journey and also paying respects to a teacher and master, but I must wait a period of time first.” Baiwei nodded. With a wave of his hand, he produced an insignia. “If you go to the city of Stillwater, you can come seek me out.”

Ning was startled. An insignia? If he accepted it, that meant that he was accepting a favor from this person. This Northmont Baiwei had an exalted status, but he acted in a cautious manner, and treated Ning, a Zifu Disciple from an ordinary clan, with such courtesy. A person like this was

worth befriending.

“Thank you, young master Baiwei.” Ning hesitated slightly, then accepted the insignia. The front side of the insignia had the characters ‘North’ and ‘Mont’, while the other side had the characters ‘Black’ and ‘Tiger’. Ning couldn’t help but mumble in a low voice, “North Mont Black Tiger?”

“That refers to my father, Northmont Blacktiger.” Baiwei smiled. Ning immediately said, “When I go to Stillwater City, I will definitely pay you a visit, young master Baiwei.”

“My subordinates will spend quite some time investigating the quality of this elemental ore mine. Let us listen to some music and wait for them.” Baiwei waved his hand lightly, and instantly, the maids appeared from behind the curtains at the sides of the hall. They were carrying musical instruments and were all extremely beautiful. Soon, music began to ring out.

At the same time, other maids delivered delicacies for them to eat. After a long period of casual conversation, Ning began to feel an increased sense of goodwill towards this Northmont Baiwei. But suddenly...

“The Raindragon Guards have a mission to capture the members of the Ji clan for interrogation. I would like to ask the master of this warship to assist me in this.” A cold, sharp voice rang out from straight ahead, echoing within the warship. Even Ning and Baiwei, who were within the main hall, could clearly hear this voice. Ning turned his head to stare out through the glass. He saw, from afar, a red-clothed youth who stood there above a red cloud. The youth was staring coldly in their direction.

# Chapter 37: Matters Resolved

Atop the warship. Ji Ninefire, Ji Ishwin, and the others all felt shock in their hearts. The Raindragon Guards had come to arrest them for interrogation? Their Ji clan had never committed any grave sins.

“This Raindragon Guard is most likely a member of Snowdragon Mountain.” Ji Truekeep sent. “Right. He came quite quickly. He hastened here in just two short hours from the main Snowdragon Mountain sect.” Ninefire nodded as well.

The only enemy they had offended was Snowdragon Mountain. And, as a major sect, it was normal for Snowdragon Mountain to have members who were also Raindragon Guards.

“A Raindragon Guard is here to deal with a case?” A gentle voice rang out, and the black-uniformed Northmont Baiwei leisurely strolled out down the stairs from the second floor, with Ning following behind him. While walking down, Baiwei glanced at the red-clothed youngster who stood in midair in the distance. “What case does the Raindragon Guard have, for you to come arrest the members of the Ji clan?”

The distant Xue Hongyi, standing upon that red cloud, saw that black-uniformed youth, and his face immediately changed. As a member of the Raindragon Guard, it could be said that his power was extremely great, almost dominantly so, within Stillwater Commandery. However, upon encountering someone from the Marquisate of Stillwater, he had to somewhat restrain himself. An ordinary member of the Marquisate was one thing, but from the clothes of the youngster before him, Hongyi could tell at one glance that this youngster was of the main lineage of the Marquisate.

“How did I end up running into someone from the main lineage of the Marquisate of Stillwater?” Hongyi frowned slightly. He hesitated momentarily, but then still said, “I have come here on assignment to arrest the wanted criminal, ‘Kebu’. I suspect that the criminal Kebu is hiding within the territory of the Ji clan, and is being protected by them.”

“You are in pursuit of the wanted criminal, Kebu?” Baiwei said softly. “Do you have a military order?” “I do.” A black scroll appeared out of nowhere within Hongyi’s hands. He unwrapped it, and it was covered with characters that proclaimed a military order had been sent for the arrest of the wanted criminal, Kebu, and that the order had been issued to ‘Xue Hongyi’.

Baiwei glanced at it, immediately able to tell that this truly was a military order. Frowning slightly, he glanced at Xue Hongyi. He mused to himself that this Xue Hongyi truly was remarkable; upon seeing him, Baiwei had immediately understood that this person should be a member of Snowdragon Mountain, here to capture the Ji clan and take revenge upon them! To a mighty, exalted Raindragon Guard, dealing with the Ji clan would be simplicity itself. And yet, he had first gone to accept a military mission, and then find the excuse of claiming that the Ji clan was suspected of aiding and hiding a wanted criminal. This really was an airtight plan.

“What should we do?” “A military order from the Raindragon Guard?” The members of the Ji clan were all somewhat panicking. As for Ning, he stared at the distant scroll of parchment, then gave the red-clothed youngster a careful glance. “Based on what Adept Mu Xiao had told me, he had only been permitted to join the Raindragon Guard after becoming a late-stage Wanxiang Adept. I imagine that this red-clothed youngster’s strength is considerable as well. Given how young he appears...he must be a genius as well.”

The younger a person looked, the more others needed to be wary of that person. If, for example, a toddler who appeared to be only five or six years old had suddenly appeared, proclaiming that he was here on behalf of the Raindragon Guard, that would be truly terrifying.

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“I am here on military orders to capture a wanted criminal. Young master, please assist me in this matter.” Xue Hongyi’s attitude was noticeably more polite now. “I only see that your military orders refer to the capture of the wanted criminal ‘Kebu’; they say nothing about seizing

members of the Ji clan.” Northmont Baiwei snapped. “I think you had best depart.”

Xue Hongyi, standing atop that red cloud in the distance, grew angry. He barked, “The wanted criminal, Kebu, is hiding within the Ji clan. The Raindragon Guard has come to arrest him. Can it be, young master, that you are going to give him shelter?”

At a time like this, the reputation of Snowdragon Mountain was completely useless. Only the reputation of the Raindragon Guard would be effective!

“Bullshit!” Baiwei pointed at Xue Hongyi and cursed, “Do you know what is going on, right now? Why have I come here? Go ask the members of Snowdragon Mountain this question! Dong Fanyu, hurry up and go speak to your uncle-master.”

Dong Fanyu was nervous. “Dong Fanyu.” Atop the red cloud, Xue Hongyi gave him a glance and verified that it was indeed Dong Fanyu. Prior to coming, he naturally had familiarized himself with the appearances of the members of the Swallow Mountain branch. Earlier, when passing through Snowdragon City, he had discovered that there wasn’t even a single Zifu Disciple present. “What is going on, Fanyu? Why has this young master of the Marquisate of Stillwater come here?”

Dong Fanyu hurriedly said, “This young master of the Marquisate is the Marquisate’s envoy. He has come to sign a transfer agreement with the Ji clan.” “Transfer agreement?” Xue Hongyi frowned.

Northmont Baiwei laughed loudly. “Your fellow disciples of Snowdragon Mountain, including Adept Xu Li, all died here, because they wanted to forcibly take this elemental ore mine. However, this elemental ore mine has already been transferred to the Marquisate of Stillwater; naturally, we will protect the Ji clan.”

“Even if you came with a military order specifically specifying the Ji clan as to be apprehended, the high level members of your Raindragon Guard would need to come to an accord with the Marquisate of Stillwater on this matter.” Baiwei snapped. “In addition, carry a message from me to the

Primal Daoists of your Snowdragon Mountain. The Ji clan is under the protection of the Marquisate of Stillwater! Let him be wiser in his actions!"

Xue Hongyi, hearing this, ground his teeth. "Fine." Xue Hongyi immediately flew away atop his red cloud, transforming into a streak of red light that quickly disappeared.

If Northmont Baiwei wished to help the Ji clan due to personal reasons, he, Xue Hongyi, would've dared to rely on his status as a Raindragon Guard to struggle against him. But...

If this person came in the capacity of envoy, and had signed a transfer agreement, he was currently representing the entire Marquisate of Stillwater! If the Marquisate declared that someone was under their protection, then within the borders of Stillwater Commandery, not even Raindragon Guards would dare to interfere. If a truly evil and vicious criminal was within the Ji clan, they would still need to go negotiate with the Marquisate of Stillwater. Only after the Marquisate gave its blessing would the Raindragon Guard go make the arrest.

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"Thank you, young master." "Thank you, young master, for saving our Ji clan." The members of the Ji clan watched as the red-clothed youngster departed. All of them spoke with great joy. Previously, when they had heard that this person had come on orders from the Raindragon Guard, they had been so terrified that their hearts had trembled.

Ning said hurriedly as well, "Thank you, young master Baiwei." "I came here to sign a transfer agreement. It is my duty to guarantee your safety." Baiwei laughed softly. "That fellow name Xue Hongyi, he dressed himself in the imperial garbs of the Raindragon Guard, but he forgot his station! How dare he act so arrogantly in front of the Marquisate of Stillwater? Hmph! Nothing more than Snowdragon Mountain!"

The Ji clan, listening, all felt envious. These words were utterly domineering. Nothing more than Snowdragon Mountain! To the Marquisate of Stillwater, Snowdragon Mountain was nothing more than one of the powers under its dominion. If the Marquisate was angered, it

wouldn't be hard for it to completely uproot the entire Snowdragon Mountain. But to the Ji clan, Snowdragon Mountain was an enormous creature, while the Marquisate was an even more unimaginably powerful behemoth.

From far away, two figures flew over. They quickly landed on the ship's deck. They were warriors, dressed in armor. One of them said respectfully, "Reporting to the young master: We have finished our investigations. This elemental ore mine has a circumference of four thousand kilometers, and is more than three hundred kilometers deep. The quality is extremely high, and there are even quite a few high-grade elemental stones."

"Mm." Baiwei nodded slightly with satisfaction, then laughed as he looked towards Ning and Ninefire. "Patriarch Ninefire of the Ji clan and Ji Ning, the two of you can follow me into the main hall, where we shall sign the transfer agreement."

"Right." Ninefire and Ning all acknowledged as they followed Baiwei into the second floor of the hall.

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There were two scrolls lying on a table within the room. The wording on both scrolls was identical; they were both transfer agreements. They described how the division would be, how the Ji clan would be protected; everything was explained in detail.

"Take out your official writ for the City of Ten Thousand Swords. Press the insignia of it against it as a seal, then sign your names." Northmont Baiwei said. "The grand seal of the Marquisate is already there. We are simply waiting for your seals now."

Ning and Ninefire exchanged glances. Not hesitating at all, they immediately signed their names and sealed both documents.

"One of the agreements will be left with you. The other will belong to the Marquisate." Baiwei smiled. "This is all according to the rules."

Ninefire immediately laughed. "Our Ji clan is boundlessly overjoyed to have survived this tribulation. 70% of this elemental ore mine shall belong

to the Marquisate, but for our Ji clan, 10% is enough. The remaining 20%, our Ji clan would like to offer to you, young master, to thank you for saving our Ji clan.”

Ninefire was a sly old fellow who had lived for nearly four centuries. How crafty was he? He knew very well that although on the surface, 30% of this elemental ore mine was to belong to the Ji clan, in reality, that amount would be secretly whittled down. It was better for them to directly offer it to an important person, so as to gain that person’s favor.

“No need.” Baiwei smiled. “As soon as Ji Ning and I met each other, it felt as though we were two old friends. Don’t worry. There will be no ‘whittling down’ of your share of the elemental ore mine. Who would dare try to seize something belonging to my friend?”

Friend? Ning’s heart turned warm. Baiwei continued, “I will arrange for soldiers to take responsibility for excavating this elemental ore mine. When the time comes, your Ji clan can take responsibility for mining out the actual ore. The elemental ore you mine out can simply be sent to the soldiers.”

“Alright.” Ninefire hurriedly nodded. “Mm.” Baiwei nodded gently as well. Ninefire, seeing that this person still wished to speak with Ning, immediately said, “If there’s nothing else, I will leave.” And then, he departed.

The only ones left in the hall were Ning, Baiwei, and the two maids.

“Ji Ning,” Baiwei said, “You have had such incredible accomplishments, even within the Ji clan; your innate talent vastly surpasses that of that ‘Xue Hongyi’ fellow’s. I urge you not to spend too much time in a small place such as this. The vast world is the place you truly belong. In the future, you will definitely become a momentous figure within the entire Stillwater Commandery.”

Ning said hurriedly, “Young master Baiwei, you praise me too highly. However, very soon, I will go out adventuring.”

“Mm.” Baiwei nodded slightly. Ning continued, “I have always been interested about one thing. Dare I ask, young master, how is it that you



arrived at the Ji clan so quickly? It most likely would've taken quite some time for the news that the Ji clan has found an elemental ore mine to even make its way to the Marquisate."

If the Marquisate of Stillwater hadn't arrived when he did, the Ji clan most likely would've had no end of troubles.

"Hahaha..." Baiwei laughed. "Do you know how this elemental ore mine was formed?" Ning shook his head puzzled. "I..."

Baiwei smiled. "This elemental ore mine was formed after a magical formation was set up by a Primal Daoist who was training here in seclusion to try and make a breakthrough. The formation drew in and condensed boundless amounts of natural, elemental energy, finally resulting in the formation of this giant elemental ore mine. As for that Primal Daoist, he broke through to the Earth Immortal stage."

"Earth Immortal?" Ning was startled. So that underground stone room was where the Earth Immortal had stayed. "That Earth Immortal is known as Immortal Firedragon." Baiwei said. "After making his breakthrough, he was invited to join the Marquisate of Stillwater. In his welcoming banquet, my father spoke with him and quickly learned of the existence of an elemental ore mine here, and that it was within the Ji clan's territory. Thus, I was given this mission and came to sign the transfer agreement with your Ji clan."

Ning now understood. So it hadn't been the Ji clan making a report; rather, it was that the Marquisate had already known of this. No wonder they had arrived so quickly!

"Alright. This matter is now at an end. I won't stay here any longer. If you, brother Ji, have anything further that you need, you can come find me. I will definitely show the hospitality expected of a host." Northmont Baiwei laughed.

"Definitely." Ning responded.

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Oxhorn Mountain. The Netherwurm Heavenlock Formation had been

collected. The members of the Ji clan raised their heads, staring towards the distant horizon. That warship had already departed, leaving behind only eight Zifu Disciple level soldiers.

“Cough.” Ji Ishwin, who up till now had maintained a fierce aura, suddenly seemed to grow fragile. His face turned ashen, and he began to cough.

“Father.” Ning turned his head towards his father, Ishwin.

# Chapter 38: Leaving Swallow Mountain

Ji Ishwin coughed, his face ashen. Seeing the worried look on his son's face, he couldn't help but laugh. "Previously, I used multiple forbidden techniques. My Zifu has been twisting and contorting, and is on the verge of collapse. Thus, my body has suddenly grown much weaker."

"Used multiple forbidden techniques?" Ning was astonished. "Father, then, you..." "Hahaha." Ishwin laughed jubilantly as he stroked Ning's head. "This battle was the last battle I would ever fight. Afterwards, I will become a useless cripple. Naturally, I had to use as many forbidden techniques as I could."

Ning's face changed. Forbidden techniques were enormously harmful to the body; they relied on sacrificing the body's future longevity, then using that to reach a level of power beyond that which was normally possible.

"Ishwin, your body...?" Ji Ninefire's face changed as well. "I should be able to live for another month." Ishwin said. "A month!" Ning's face instantly turned white, without any trace of blood.

Why. Why had it ended up like this? He...he had clearly made it back in time. Why did it have to be like this?

"Ji Ning." Ishwin looked at his son. "You've seen so much life and death. Can it be that you still do not understand? To me, living a life akin to a cripple's would be a life of torture. I would rather die gloriously after my final, greatest battle...that the fate to which I belong." Ning's body was faintly trembling as he listened.

"In addition, your mother has been waiting for me for too long. I should go accompany her." Ishwin looked at his son. Looked at him closely. "After your mother died, the only thing keeping me here was you. But you no longer need my protection. You are now capable of truly spreading your wings and roaming about the world."

"No, Father..." Ning looked at his father, his eyes turning moist.

They had survived a tremendous tribulation. They should have been

overjoyed, but Ning simply couldn't find it in himself to rejoice, no matter what.

Time passed by. Ning spent every single day with his father. Each time, the two of them, father and son, would train in swordplay with each other. Although they were simply sparring and displaying their techniques, the two of them fully absorbed themselves within their fights. By their side, a snowy white hound would often appear. At other times, a young Bluestone would appear. Still other times, their steward, Autumn Leaf, would watch from the side.

Finally...that day came.

Ishwin reclined on his seat. The Whitewater Hound was in its original form and by Ishwin's side, its head gently nudging against Ishwin.

"Little White." Ishwin gently stroked the fur atop the Whitewater Hound's head. "To have had a brother like you in my life...I die with no regrets." The Whitewater Hound lowered its head, its tears falling down.

"Ji Ning." Ishwin looked at the nearby Ning. "Originally, I wanted to let Little White regain his freedom. However, as a Zifu-level Godbeast, I'm afraid that after he regains his free will, he will be captured by other Immortal practitioners. In addition, Little White has watched you grow up and is very close to you. I want to have him follow you. This is my wish, and it is also Little White's wish."

Ning nodded lightly. "Alright." Ishwin looked at his lifelong brother. "Little White. Help me take care of Ji Ning. When I'm going, you will be Ning's elder relative. Make sure you keep him from going astray." The Whitewater Hound nodded lightly.

From within his clothes, Ishwin retrieved a piece of beast skin parchment, handing it over to Ning. "I know that you deeply desire to know who it was that killed your uncle and harmed myself and your mother so badly. The name is on this, along with some information about him. I originally wanted to let Grandfather give it to you, but since I survived and returned from Oxhorn Mountain, I decided to give it to you personally."

Ning accepted the beast skin, his eyes flashing with a fierce light. Grinding his teeth, he said, "I swear that I, Ji Ning, will definitely kill them and take revenge!"

Ishwin nodded. "I won't stop you from taking revenge. However, remember this. In the hearts of myself and your mother, your life is far more valuable than theirs."

Ning nodded. "I understand."

"Mm." Ishwin could clearly sense his life force ebbing away. His breathing grew weak. Smiling, he said, "Remember. After I die, cremate me and scatter my ashes over Serpentwing Lake. I once promised your mother that after I died, I would accompany her."

Ning forced back his tears as he listened. "In my life," Ishwin continued, "I was fearless and worry-free as a child, hard-working as a youth, and relied on the sword in my hand to become famous throughout Swallow Mountain." He stared towards the empty skies, his gaze growing distant. "I once swore that I would rely on the sword in my hand to make my name resonate throughout the boundless lands of the Darcian Dynasty! Unfortunately...I won't be able to accomplish it. However...my son will accomplish it."

Ishwin looked at Ning. His eyes were filled with endless expectations. "Ji Ning. You will accomplish it!"

A sour feeling was in Ning's heart. He could still clearly remember how his father had taught him, step by step, how to use the sword.

"From today onwards, I will train you in the sword." He was only a toddler. His father had seemed so tall, so muscular, so big. Starting from those thirteen basic sword stances, his father had taught him, step by step...

Ning now understood that at that moment in time, his father, whose own Immortal path had been shattered, had entrusted his expectations in the sword to Ning himself.

"I will accomplish it." Ning looked at his father and made gave his word.

“Father, I will accomplish it. I definitely will. I will definitely make my name resound throughout the boundless lands of the Darcian Dynasty.”

Ishwin reached out with his hand, gently stroking Ning’s face. His hand was trembling.

“Remember. Live a good life. Live an exciting life.” Ishwin’s voice was beginning to fade, but his smile only grew brighter and brighter. “Live a happy life. A happy, free life...”

His father’s hand suddenly went limp, and his eyes closed as well.

Thud.

Ning fell to his knees, pressing his head to the ground, grinding his teeth. “AAAAAH!” Ning suddenly aised his head again, letting out a loud howl.

The Whitewater Hound used its head to gently nudge Ishwin’s body. As it did, tears appeared in the corner of its eyes as well.

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No one was aware of what had happened. Ji Ishwin died quietly. Only Ji Ning and the Whitewater Hound were by his side. The other servants on Brightheart Island did not have any idea.

“Splash.” “Splash.” A boat was floating about atop Serpentwing Lake. Ning was at the helm of the boat, holding a crematory urn while sprinkling the ashes within the urn towards the water of the lake, letting the wind pick it up and merge it into the lake.

The glow of the setting sun was around him.

A small boat. A solitary youth. A large, snowy white hound. Together, they slowly drifted on the lake.

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Ning didn’t immediately leave Swallow Mountain. He continued to live atop Brightheart Island, within Serpentwing Lake. He also made a trip to the underwater estate, where he challenged and passed the second level of the Wargod Hall! The second level, to the current Ning, posed no danger

whatsoever. Afterwards, Ning selected yet another Mortal-ranked magic treasure.

Time passed, and in the blink of an eye, autumn left and winter arrived. There were large goose-feathers of snow falling down from the skies in the outside world. As for Ning, he sat within his study, executing swordplay techniques with his fingers, then recording a few things down on a beastskin parchment.

“Autumn Leaf.” Ning called out. “Young master.” Autumn Leaf soon pushed the door open and walked in.

“Arrange for some people to notify the City of Ten Thousand Swords and West Prefecture City.” Ning said. “Tell them that I am leaving.” Autumn Leaf was stunned, and she looked at Ning. “Leaving? Young master, are you going to leave Swallow Mountain?”

Autumn Leaf had known long ago that this day would come. Her young master was a supreme talent, the likes of which was rarely seen in the world. Sooner or later, he would leave Swallow Mountain. But now that this day had actually arrived, Autumn Leaf still felt heartsick and unwilling to part from him.

“You truly are foolish.” Ning walked forward, reaching out and wiping away Autumn Leaf’s tears. “I need to go out on a good adventure. The world is so vast, and there are so many experts within it. I can’t just hide here and bask in my own self-importance.”

“Understood. Autumn Leaf understands.” Autumn Leaf said hurriedly. “Autumn Leaf.” Ning took out a kalestone and handed it to her. “This kalestone has some treasures within. I have prepared them for you and Bluestone. Spring Grass died. Although I am leaving, I have to take good care of Bluestone. There is a book within the kalestone that carefully details the ways in which these treasures can be used.”

“Amongst them is an essence-cleansing pill which I acquired from that Wanxiang Adept. After eating it, one will qualitatively transform and rise in power, making the likelihood of you entering the Xiantian lifeform stage become much higher.” Ning said.

“This...this is too precious.” Autumn Leaf, shocked, hurriedly refused. Ning looked at Autumn Leaf. “The path of Immortal cultivation is a long one. I don’t want to see you die early on, Autumn Leaf. If you become a Xiantian lifeform, you will live longer. Don’t refuse...perhaps in places like Swallow Mountain, essence-cleansing pills are precious, but to formidable figures like Wanxiang Adepts, they aren’t much at all.”

“Live longer.” Autumn Leaf nodded gently, no longer refusing. She looked at Ning. “Young master, will you return?” “Of course.” Ning sighed as he spoke. “I will definitely return. Here within Serpentwing Lake, there are many things which I cannot bear to part from. Once I have reached my goals in training, I will return and live here at Serpentwing Lake permanently.”

“I will wait for you, young master.” Autumn Leaf looked at Ning. Ning laughed. “Don’t just wait pointlessly. If you do meet someone you like, then marry him.” Autumn Leaf shook her head. “I am your handmaiden, young master. I will be your handmaiden for my entire life.”

Ning didn’t say anything further.

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The next day. The outside world was covered with a decorative silver layer of snow. The snow was so white, so pure. Ji Young, Ji Redflower, Ji Ninefire, Ji Truekeep, and the other members of the Ji clan had all hurried here.

“These are some secret manuals that I managed to acquire by a stroke of good fortune.” Ning handed them over to Patriarch Ninefire. “Most of them are comparable to the [Melody of Ten Thousand Swords] or the [Raindrop Sutra].”

“This scroll records the insights on formations by a Loose Immortal, known as the [Nine Scrolls on Formations].” Ning handed this to Patriarch Ninefire as well. “The profound mysteries within are unfathomable. However, to study formations requires talent and time. In the future, I hope that it can be entrusted to a suitable clansman.”

Ninefire, Truekeep, and the others were all shocked. The insights of a



Loose Immortal regarding formations?

“As for this, this is known as the [Thunderflame Sword Addendum].” Ning took out a fur-clad book. “This was developed based on my hypotheses regarding the fragments of the [Thunderflame Sword] we possess. It includes some of my own insights regarding swordplay. I was able to create four additional sword techniques, and thus this [Thunderflame Sword Addendum] has a total of seven major sword techniques.”

“As for this...over the course of the last half year, I have spent virtually all my energy and effort on creating this.” Ning took out another fur-clad book. It had three characters written on it: ‘Rain’ ‘Water’ ‘Sutra’. “The set of sword techniques recorded within, I named the [Rainwater Sutra]. In the future, if anyone in our Ji clan can reach the level of mastery in the [Raindrop Sutra], they can learn from this [Rainwater Sutra].”

Ning looked at the book within his hands, filled with emotions. Over the past half year, he had pondered nonstop regarding this. He had summarized all of the insights he had gained regarding the ‘Dao of Rainwater’, then written it all down into this [Rainwater Sutra]. The summarization process had caused Ning to make great strides in further understanding the Dao of Rainwater as well.

As the person who had comprehended the Rainwater Sword Domain, the [Rainwater Sutra] he had written contained hundreds of different layers of insight regarding the True Meaning of the Dao. Even his every stroke of the brush had contained sword-intent within.

“This...” Ninefire and the others, upon seeing the three large words imprinted atop the [Rainwater Sutra], could sense the sword-intent pouring from this tome. Their faces all changed. As experts, they could sense how extraordinary this [Rainwater Sutra] was. Even they felt the awe-inspiring presence from it; no wonder Ji Ning required practitioners to master the [Raindrop Sutra] before learning from his [Rainwater Sutra].

“From today onwards, the [Rainwater Sutra] will be the treasure that protects our entire Ji clan.” Ninefire said with incomparable excitement.

The other clansmen were all excited as well. For the clan to produce a genius was a matter of luck, but for this book to be left behind would allow them to raise more geniuses in the future. This [Rainwater Sutra] was clearly above the level of the [Melody of Ten Thousand Swords] and other secret manuals.

.....

Ning didn't ask for others to send him off. He had Ninefire and the others all go back.

Late at night. It was very quiet. Ning, by himself, led the Whitewater Hound to the side of the lake, then knelt down atop the snow. Facing the endless waters of Serpentwing Lake, he kowtowed three times, then said solemnly, "Father, Mother, I, Ji Ning, will execute our enemies within Snowdragon Mountain and take revenge for the two of you. I will also definitely make my name resound within the vast lands of the Darcian Dynasty."

"Please forgive your son for having to depart for a time." Ning rose to his feet, then looked at the Whitewater Hound by his side. "Uncle White, let's go."

"That little girl..." The Whitewater Hound sent to Ning. Ning glanced towards the distance. There stood Autumn Flower, far away in the darkness. Autumn Flower knew that Ning was going to leave, so she hadn't slept at all. She was waiting quietly. Upon her seeing Ning look towards her, she couldn't help but cry. Ning grinned towards her.

"Let's go." Ning stepped onto the boat that had appeared out of nowhere in front of him, and the Whitewater Hound followed him onto it as well. Whoosh! The boat soared rapidly into the air, piercing through the dark night skies.

"Young master." Autumn Leaf immediately ran forward a few steps. Raising her head, she stared towards the distance. "I will definitely wait for your return, young master. Definitely."

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The night sky. The flying boat was amidst the clouds. Ning looked down at the vast, endless world. He could see the massive lake below him as well: Serpentwing Lake. He could also see Brightheart Island at the center of it.

Ning gave it a deep, meaningful look. There were too many things here which he couldn't bear to part from.

"Let's go!" Ning turned his head, staring towards the vast, endless night sky. Outside Swallow Mountain, there was an even larger, even more exciting world.

Swoosh!

The flying boat had only a youngster and a snowy white dog atop it. It quickly disappeared into the horizons of the world.

# Credits

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